Inscribed copy

Z28

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/millerofdeanhaug00ball

To Baron de Bunes. K. H
with very grateful respects
from the Author

THE

MILLER OF DEANHAUGH.

Edinburgh 11th June 1862

BY

JAMES BALLANTINE,

AUTHOR OF "THE GABERLUNZIE'S WALLET."

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY ALEX. A. RITCHIE.

In this poor life, brief as a winter day,
From whence apace we all must pass away,
Is it not well to treasure in the mind
Grateful remembrance of the good and kind?
That those we leave may hold us ever dear,
And Virtue thus may bloom immortal here.

EDINBURGH:

JOHN MENZIES, 61 PRINCE'S STREET;

D. BOGUE, FLEET STREET, LONDON.

MDCCCXLIV.

MACPHERSON & SYME, PRINTERS,
31 EAST ROSE LANE.

Ye needna fee a glib-mou'd* chiel
To plead the cause he canna feel ;
There's nane can tell your tale sae weel,
As ye can do yoursell.

Your lawyer speaks just as he's fee'd,
Your black-foot wooin'† comes sma' speed ;
Gin ye be true, your cause will need
Nae ither than yoursell.
Gaberlunzie Proverb.

NOTWITHSTANDING the eager importunities of my kind friend Jot, to be permitted to edit this little work, and the no less anxious solicitude on the part of his wife, my grand-niece Mary, who is naturally very proud of the reputation which her husband has already gained for the share he took in the publication of my "Wallet," I have on this occasion resolved to come forward in person, and to relate the story of my good old friend, "The Miller of Deanhaugh," in my own way.

Several reasons, all sufficiently weighty, have induced me to come to this resolution, and these reasons I shall explain as briefly as possible. In the first place, it is evident that an eye-witness is, in so far as regards truth of description, the most competent person to give an account of what has come under his own observation ; and that, although

---

To remove all chance of any portion of this work being unintelligible to English readers, a free translation of every peculiar Scottish phrase will be given at the bottom of the page in which such term occurs.

* An oily tongued fellow. † Making love by proxy.

the record of an occurrence may be couched in better language by a second party, who describes only from hearsay, the same degree of accuracy can hardly be expected.

Such is my opinion, and when in our well regulated courts of justice I have listened to the learned judge, in his address to the jury, warning them to beware of the sophistry of the counsel on either side, I have often thought that that high functionary gave himself much unnecessary trouble. A plain unvarnished statement by a downright earnest true witness, however untutored or rude he may be in speech or thought, does more to convince an honest jury, than all the special pleading of the most eloquent advocate.

This opinion, grounded on some experience, will, when applied to the case in question, appear sufficient cause alone why I should take the matter into my own hands. But there are various other reasons, which, however, I shall content myself with merely enumerating, and this chiefly for the purpose of convincing my readers that I am neither ungrateful to, nor unmindful of Jot, although my anxiety to serve the cause of truth more efficiently, has induced me to dispense with his able services on this important occasion.

In "The Gaberlunzie's Wallet" the moral was not so distinctly brought out as it ought to have been. Many extraneous matters were introduced where they were not wanted, and where they hung like drags, rather retarding the narrative than helping it forward. Many little pieces of tittle-tattle, too, which had been communicated to Jot, in a confidential way by his kind good old aunt, did he make no scruple of disclosing. Many small bits of family gossip, with which the public had little to do, did he retail publicly; nay, so completely oblivious was he at times both of "The Wallet" and its proprietor, that, instead of the work being mainly the biography of a Gaberlunzie, it turned out, to a large extent at least, but the autobiography of Jot himself.

I love the good fellow well notwithstanding all these offences. They were unintentional on his part, and I look on them with no angry feeling. I love his little son, my fair-haired namesake, also, with a strength of affection I cannot account for, unless it be that he seems just such a rogue as I myself was at his age, addicted to rambling, irregular in his studies, and rapid in his sensations. He is also passionately fond of songs and ballads, has a good memory, and administers to my poetical vanity, by reciting my productions with much fluency and correctness. He is likewise very kind hearted, and on more than one occasion, when he and I were walking together, and when thinking him hungry, I had given him a penny to purchase a tart, I have seen him give the tart away to some juvenile gaberlunzie whom we met on the way, and who exhibited symptoms of a vigorous

appetite. These and other little traits of his character, opening up to me daily, renders me exceedingly anxious to do all that I can for him; and as his parents are yearly adding to the family stock, and may have some little difficulty in providing for their numerous progeny, I have resolved to adopt the little fellow, and, as the first fruits of my adoption, I mean to devote the profits of this work, if any there shall be, to his education.

Many of the incidents and characters casually alluded to in "The Wallet," are suggestive to me of interesting tales therewith connected, and it is an instance of such casual allusion that has reminded me of the story of "The Miller of Deanhaugh." A little episode is introduced in the work above alluded to relative to a poor family, consisting of grandmother, mother, and child, the last of whom I have endeavoured to describe in the poem entitled "The wee raggit Lassie." The child's father had been a millwright in the little village near Edinburgh, called the Water of Leith. He was a man of considerable natural talent, and of excellent character. After a long and severe illness he died, leaving his family sunk in poverty. The landlord shortly afterwards had ejected the widow from her little cottage, and she, who had her husband's mother and her own child to provide for, had been driven to seek refuge in one of the crowded districts of the Old Town of Edinburgh. When I first discovered these poor people, the mother had been confined to bed for weeks with a dangerous fever. They were steeped to the lips in poverty, and I was thankful that heaven had directed my steps to render assistance to such a deserving and destitute family.

In this labour of love I was cordially joined by my kind friends Mr and Miss Hepburn, who not only found employment for the widow, but through their intimacy and influence with the members of Council, got the little orphan admitted into the Trades' Maiden Hospital, one of the charitable institutions with which Edinburgh abounds, where she was brought up and educated.

Many years have elapsed since my first introduction to that sweet child. Many changes have taken place in the world since that period; whole villages have been razed to the ground, and the ploughshare has been driven over the site of many hamlets where I had often met with kindly welcomes. New towns, new houses, have arisen, with which I have neither connection nor sympathy; new and kind friends, it is true, have proffered me their friendship, and the feeling has been reciprocated with no want of goodwill on my part. Yet, my heart still clings to the past with infinite love; and amongst the few friends of those days still spared to me, there are none in whom I have taken, or continue to take, a warmer interest, than in the fate of that good, kind, affectionate child.

In tracing her career, then, and in recording her actions, it will not appear unnatural that I should occasionally indulge in a strain of panegyric towards her which is somewhat foreign to my usual manner, and if my excellent friend, "The Miller of Deanhaugh," come in for a share of that encomium, be assured that he well deserves it. As I have elsewhere remarked, the unfortunate suffer more from the absence of active sympathy than from positive oppression; but this is a sin that does not lie at the honest miller's door, for he has never been remiss in sending assistance to the needy. His conduct seems always to have been based on the purest principles of Christian philanthropy, and he has had realized in his own honest happy heart all the promise held out in the following paraphrased version of that exquisite old proverb—

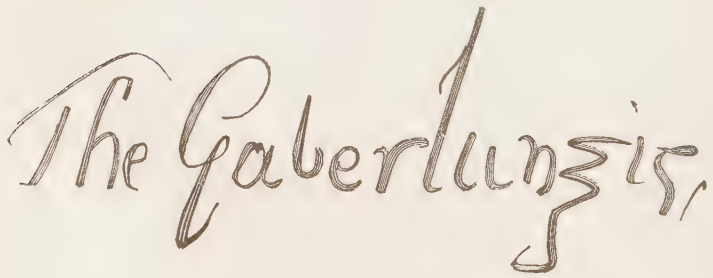
AE GUDE TURN DESERVES ANITHER.

Ye maunna be proud, although ye be great,
The poorest bodie is still your brither;
The king he may come in the cadger's gate,
An' ae gude turn aye deserves anither.

The hale o' us spring frae the same cauld clay,
An hour we bloom, in an hour we wither;
Then let us help ither to climb the brae,
As ae gude turn aye deserves anither.

The highest among us are unco wee,
Frae Heaven we get a' our gifts thegither;
Then let us divide what we get so free,
As ae gude turn aye deserves anither.

O, life is a weary journey alane,
But blythe's the road when we wend wi' ither;
And mutual gie'ing is mutual gain,
When ae gude turn aye deserves anither.



CHAPTER I.

"The new grows auld, and the auld grows new,
The warld is changing every day;
But be ye honest, and be ye true,
For truth an' honour last for aye."
Old Saying.

Time is a steady and rapid traveller, and his progress is as marked as it is swift. He leaves his foot-prints on the road as he passes along, and while millions of us wend on our weary way, and arrive at our journey's end without leaving a trace of our existence behind, there are a few who move as it were in tracts of light, and whose careers are distinguished by brilliant serieses of achievements. Every century has its peculiar character, every year its peculiar feature. Light and darkness, peace and war may alternately prevail. Man may not in some particular departments of art have advanced for thousands of years, and he may still admire at all but a hopeless distance, the sublime creations of genius bequeathed to posterity by ancient Greece and Rome. We who belong to the days of Scott and Watt, may not individually be wiser or better than those who lived in the age of Bacon and Shakespeare. We who live when transition is rendered almost as swift as volition, may not be more elevated in thought or sentiment than were the travellers of old, who had to perform their journies on foot, and their tedious voyages in lumbering vessels. The great masses of mankind now huddled together in large towns may not be so vigorous in body, as were their rural ancestors. But in the refinements and elegancies of life, the progress of mind is distinctly traceable, while it is equally easy to discern signs of the gradual improvement of man's condition, resulting from the comparative ease with which the staple commodities of life are now produced. Hence are we able to perceive, though not apt to value as we ought, the kind and beneficent gifts which Old Father Time has so liberally bestowed on us.

While the world is thus gradually improving, and mankind becoming every day more dexterous in availing themselves of the sources from which subsistence may be drawn, it appears somewhat strange that the old of every succeeding generation should always be lamenting the decline of the world's happiness, and be perpetually talking about the virtue which universally prevailed when they were

young. This feeling may be traceable to the fact that objects, moral as well as physical, generally assume a sombre hue to the dimmed vision of age; while to the bright eye of youth, they seem clothed in brilliancy and beauty. But be this as it may, such universal feeling seems to be a wise and kind provision of nature, to reconcile the aged to the departure which is approaching, by lessening the value of existence. Their reflections on the past, too, dim and indistinct though they may be, throw a faint but pleasing light around their path, which is becoming darker and darker at every step, and in the recollection of the joys of youth, they forget the infirmities of age.

Perhaps this may explain how it happens when an old road is shut up, and a new one made to supply its place, that, however crooked, steep, or rugged the former might have been, or however straight the latter may be, the ancient portion of the population of the district generally insist on retaining a preference for the condemned pathway, and, if they can, will use no other. Nor are they in all cases without some apology for such obstinacy, the old road, from its generally higher course, presenting a greater number of choice points of view, and being thus more cheerful than the new, which is always found pursuing the lowest levels.

The levelling system has not perhaps done more mischief anywhere, as regards the picturesque and romantic, than amongst some of our early built country villages, more especially those on the secluded banks of rivers, with their little peaked bridges and their irregular lines of houses, which could be approached only on either side by a very circuitous path, or by a very steep, straight cut hill road. These old landmarks, and the primitive inhabitants of such villages, look out of keeping with such modern erections as tall, lofty spanned, many arched bridges, which are often found uniting the opposite banks of rivers, stretching away far over the heads of these little unpretending communities and their thatch covered cottages. And much, undeniably, though the general comfort be enhanced by the improvements on the roads of late years, you cannot help feeling for the old villages as for old friends, whose seclusion has been rudely broken in upon by some dapper young fellow of a modern improver, who, armed with authority, declares that the old way of going on can no longer be tolerated, and that he has come to put an entirely new face on all alterable things. Now, although you can see that the new official may be much more efficient than his predecessor, still your heart takes the old fellow's part, and you cannot help exclaiming, "Well, he might have done well enough; what use was there for that young jackanapes to put him out? The poor old man would soon have gone the way of all flesh, and then the impatient intruder would have had his place as a matter of course."

The village called the Water of Leith, with which our story is associated, is situated in a suburban district of Edinburgh, and close by the side of the stream from which it derives its name. It is chiefly occupied by millers, and the mills are of very high antiquity, David I., some seven hundred years ago, having made a gift to the Abbot and Canons of Holyroodhouse of the profits arising from "the mills of Edinburgh and Dean," the name by which the said mills are still known. Fifty years ago, the road by which you approached Edinburgh from the Queensferry, a landing place whose celebrity has been revived by a late event, passed directly through this little antique village, the inhabitants of which drove a considerable trade in creature comforts, with both mounted and pedestrian travellers. It was thus also the great thoroughfare from the North, visiters from which often halted in it to refresh themselves before entering the city. Now a-days a tall elegant bridge stretches across the entire valley. A broad level road sweeps along the top of the adjoining heights, and the little village, with its little bridge and its primitive inhabitants, is neglected by all save the local antiquarian, or the admirer of the fine natural scenery with which the neighbourhood abounds;—the village itself, however, forming perhaps the most striking and romantic point of the whole. Situated in the very gullet of a precipitous part of the valley, through which the stream winds its way onward to the sea, the rising grounds entirely enclose the little township on every side, which, viewed from the adjoining heights, with its mingled assemblage of mills and cottages, gardens and crofts, wood and water, presents a scene at once pleasing and picturesque.

Although the population consists chiefly of millers and others employed at the mills, the village is not without a considerable sprinkling of other classes, such as country labourers, ploughmen in the service of neighbouring farmers, and a few carters of the old school. A number of these honest but humble personages are small lairds, possessing snug thatched self-contained houses, with little patches of garden ground behind, well stocked with either fruit trees or vegetables, and having probably a pig's palace in one of the corners; so numerous indeed are these elegant animals in one part of the village, that a punning Edinburgh writer lately dubbed it the *sow*logical gardens. All these peculiarities combined, give the place a marked sort of character, a character at once antique and national, the millers of the Water of Leith having no more affinity to, or with the staid and aristocratic citizens of Edinburgh, than if the village had been distant from the city as many miles as it is paces.

The clear complexions of the juvenile portion of this primitive community gives them a sort of aquatic character, which again arises from

the vicinity of much water, in the shape of dams, streams and lades, and the many undesired and unwelcome immersions to which the urchins are exposed, in the water-courses for supplying the mills, which runs through the very centre of the village. It is in truth rather a startling sight, when one looks to the number of children that are to be seen running and sprawling about, to see a run of water of five feet in depth, and about the same breadth, careering past and close to a long line of dwelling-house doors, the only approach to which is by flag stones laid across the stream, otherwise wholly uncovered throughout its entire length. On the edge of this water-course, there may be seen a number of fine looking clear complexioned women, dipping and plunging their snow white linen in the clear element, and swarms of chubby infants untended, romping and playing about the brink of the artificial stream, in which you would imagine some of them must be drowned every day. On expressing your astonishment how they escape, you will be told by some good dame, "That the bairns tumble sae often into the water, that neither children nor parents think onything o't;" and she may probably add, as she gives the linen another rinse in the stream, "My wee Tam fell in yesterday, and had he no been kepped by Luckie Muter at the flag-stane, he wad hae been skyted awa an' broken to flinders on the mill wheel." But, and very odd it is, there seems always to be a Luckie Muter in the way to come just in the nick of time to the rescue, for not one of the little creatures are ever drowned, although in danger of it, as one would think, at every turn.

The main street of the village is a curiosity in its way, taking a number of fantastic turns, and meeting the little peaked bridge that crosses the Water of Leith nearly at right angles. This street, however, is by no means so remarkable as the many little tortuous zig-zag lanes and alleys that branch out from it in various directions, like the small bloodvessels that spring from a main artery. The houses and mills seem to have been built first, either for the purpose of catching a waterfall for the mill-wheel, or to suit the taste of their owners,—the idea of forming streets and lanes having been matter of after consideration. In this way, houses have been thrust into such odd out of the way corners, that you have fairly to circumnavigate the building before you arrive at the entrance door.

In these little lanes, much genuine homely Scottish life and character is still to be seen;—little low lintelled doors, little four paned windows; old women sitting at doors working stockings, or feeding fowls, and children scared by your appearance, either running from you, or staring at you with looks of wondering enquiry; old fashioned wooden water *stoups* standing in the snug wooden lined inner porches

of the humble doorway; the yellow sanded kitchen floor looking clean and bright in the glare of the kitchen fire; the miller's buxom wife with her clear muslin close-eared cap, her ample short gown, and her striped apron, driving out before her to school a little mob of white headed urchins, who are one and all clamorously insisting that "it's no time yet;" or when she returns pursuing with the ladle the thievish cat, whom she had caught in the act of taking liberties with the beef in the kail-pot, that stands *sottering* on the hearth. In a corner of the room stands the pride and glory of the miller's heart, his eight-day clock, with the Cottar's Saturday Night emblazoned on the top of the dial. Every male member of the Ayrshire Cottar's family shining in a gold coat and silver breeches, while the lovely Jenny is seen with a spangled dress, and a cap glittering with brilliants, nay, even the old matron has a star shining on her breast.

The room walls also are thickly adorned with pictures brilliantly coloured, and representing such subjects as the Tomb of the Princess Charlotte, the battle of Waterloo, and the return of the Prodigal Son, the latter gentleman being attired in a smart blue coat, red vest, and flaming yellow inexpressibles. Perched on the top of a chest of drawers, is an assortment of stucco parrots, with a variety of birds unknown to ornithologists, although the brilliancy of their plumage would render them, one would think, well worthy the attention of the students of that interesting science. Peacocks' feathers and corn-babies also peep out here and there; a large sampler, the work of the eldest daughter, hangs over the mantel-piece—the bright green walls—the little white window curtains,—the unmarked yellow floor, and the whitewashed hearth, all proclaiming that this is the one cherished apartment, never used except on cases of christening or other equally important occasions. Thus, in these little alleys, if you do not carry too high a head, and are not too proud to "lout aneath a laigh lintel," you may see how comfortable and tidy is the miller's home, and how well it accords with the words of the old song,

> "O merry may the maid be that marries the miller,
> For foul day or fair day he's aye bringing till her."

You will find contentment and happiness dwelling here together, and and if you are unable good reader to appreciate such happiness, you and I differ most materially in our ideas as to what constitutes human felicity.

The humble domiciles to which we have just been alluding, are frequently found forming the ground-floors of the mills or granaries, many of which are of considerable antiquity. Over the lintels of several of them are doorstones, on which are carved the coats of arms

belonging to the fraternity of millers, with dates shewing the tenements to have been erected in the 16th century. Generally, indeed, they partake more or less of the architectural style of that age, having square projecting towers, steep roofs, crow-stepped gables and small windows. They are besides tall and not inelegant structures, and contrast strikingly enough with the thatched roofed cottages around them, adding moreover to the irregularity and boldness of the general outline.

I now know few of, and little about the millers of the Water of Leith. But there was a time when it was otherwise. There was a time when I knew many of them intimately. But there was none amongst them whom I knew so well, or so highly esteemed, as my worthy friend, and ancient crony the jolly Miller of Deanhaugh, whom it is now full time I should introduce to the notice of my readers. I know nothing personally of the "Miller of Dee," he might have been a good sort of man enough in his way; but I will back my friend, the Miller of Deanhaugh against him, or any other miller who ever lifted sack, or exacted multure, for honest jollity, genuine feeling, and irresistable humour, and could I but describe adequately his personal appearance, which was at all points in perfect accordance with his mind and the spirit by which he was animated, my readers might be able to form some idea of the breadth of his character, but I fear I cannot. The worthy miller was indeed "a muirland man of upland mak," being upwards of six feet in height, while his body was so well clad with muscles and sinewy flesh, was so broad and full in all its proportions, that it was only when you saw another well grown man beside him, that you became aware of his extraordinary stature. His face, though round, plump, and jolly, was full of expression, and although more given to laughing than crying, I have seen pity and charity more clearly depicted in that broad full countenance, than ever I saw it in the lean sharp phiz of the pretended philanthropist, whose name figures in public subscription lists, and who is always a collector when the public purse is to be drained for any professed public charity. His large, full blue eyes, which rose up very round, and whose prominent cases were considerably wrinkled with laughing, were very piercing, and although not of very quick movement, were full of meaning. His nose rose like the arch of a bridge; his mouth although it looked small when contracted by displeasure, sunk as it was amongst a mass of cheek and chin, when opened in a hearty laugh, usurped the sovereignty of his whole face—then while his eyes glistened—his sides shook—he rocked and reeled in convulsive merriment, and the very earth seemed to rock and reel beneath him, as if it too was disposed to be jocund out of pure sympathy with the jolly miller.

With all this proneness to mirth, however, Deanhaugh was a staid

man generally; and when met alone, exhibited rather a thoughtful cast of countenance. He was never the first to speak, and never took the last word, either in conversation or argument. Yes, he once did, and that to some purpose too; but I must not anticipate.

Halbert Flemyng, for such was the name of the Miller of Deanhaugh, had raised himself, by his own industry, from being the miller's man, to be master of the mill in which he wrought, and by the name of which, like the generality of Scottish millers and farmers, he was better known than by his own surname. The mill was a tall steep-roofed old building, and so beautifully situated, that when you leant on the old weatherbeaten oaken sluice-gate attached to it, and gazed around you, you saw much calculated at once to gratify your heart, and delight your eye. A huge cliff rose behind, its brow crowned with lofty trees, its ridged and seamed face overhung with long fringes of pendulous plants, and studded at various points with clusters of richly tinted wild flowers, which, like all the weakly and delicate children of nature, generally congregate together. Sloping away to the south was a noble park, thickly wooded with stately trees, in which a number of old hunters were either nibbling the grass, or coursing and racing sportively amongst the rich pasture.

The mill stood close by the Water of Leith, which, at this point runs over a shelving ledge of rock, deeply marked with fissures, scars, and ridges, over the rough weatherbeaten edges of which the stream was now seen purling and trickling, and bubbling in a hundred silver rills, now rolling in one unbroken fall over the whole breadth of the ledge, and now again gathering itself into a quiet deep pool, whence it glided away on its career in unbroken silence. Several of these pools were well adapted for bathing, and, in summer, not only the boys of the village, but many of the Edinburgh gutter-bloods, might be seen half-immersed in their cooling waters, and laving each other with showers of the limpid element. For these pools, and the amusement they afforded, knowledge was neglected by the rising generation to a serious extent; schools were deserted, and mothers and sisters might have been seen running about in quest of the young deserters, vainly endeavouring to select their own from among the crowds of naked urchins who were plunging and floundering about, and equally unsuccessful in their attempts to make them listen to or answer to their names.

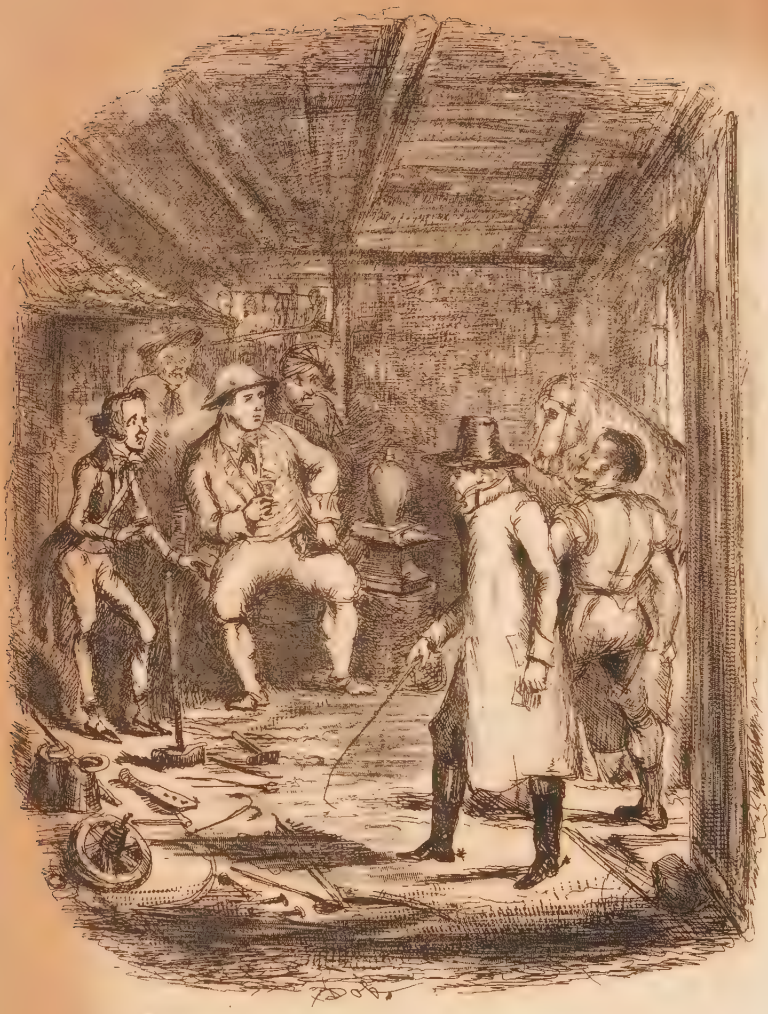
On the opposite side of the stream, and a little above the mill, the bank rose to a considerable height, and although very steep, was covered with rich and beautiful verdure, intersected by pretty little brown footpaths, and overhung by some stately old trees. This bank was used by the "gudewives" and lasses of the Dean as a bleaching green:

and many a time and oft did the honest miller stand with his back against the water sluice-gate, of which I have spoken, listening to the music of the babbling wavelets, and the merry voices of the women, as they came, blended together on the soft summer breeze. Often was the honest man so delighted with these musical combinations, that although he had not a single note of music in his whole composition, he has been caught endeavouring to swell the harmony with a shrill and prolonged whistle.

At a short distance below Flemyng's mill stands an elegant little temple, built over the mineral well of St Bernard's, a spring said to have had its medicinal properties imparted to it by the saint whose name it bears. This worthy is reported to have become proprietor of most of the ground in this neighbourhood, by promising the owners three acres in paradise for every earthly acre they left him. This well is still in great repute, and in the last century, when large potations were fashionable, the Luckenbooth merchants were much in the habit of repairing thither in the mornings to drink of the water, which was considered an excellent restorative after a deep debauch ; and that abominable abortion the Earthen Mound, is said to have owed its origin to these latter worthies, who formed a footpath through the intervening hollow called the North Loch, to facilitate their intercourse with their favourite morning rendezvous, St Bernard's Well. It is insinuated, indeed, that the medicinal qualities of the spring were occasionally improved by the addition of a little genuine cogniac, which the keeper of the well kept for the especial use of some of his morning customers; but scandal is always to be suspected, and the report may not, after all, be well founded.

Beyond St Bernard's Well, and all along the course of the stream to the Firth of Forth, the scenery was, at the period when Flemyng occupied Deanhaugh Mill, much more romantic than it is now. The noble Firth with its isles lay sleeping in the distance. The sides of the valley through which the stream glided, exhibited a continuous succession of fertile fields and clumps of wood. The white cottages of the little village of Stockbridge, peeping through the foliage of the latter, and gleaming bright when lighted up by a summer setting sun, all contributed to make Halbert Flemyng proud, not only of his mill itself, but of the scenery also, by which it was surrounded.

It was with a countenance expressive of every kindly feeling that, on an evening after the last sack had been removed from the funnel, and the worthy miller's face and hands had undergone a thorough ablution, he lighted his cutty pipe and sauntered up to the village of the Water of Leith, to take his nightly share in the chat and the cheer of his friend Mathew Waldie's smithy ; and as it is with an incident con-



nected with Mathew and his workshop that our tale properly commences, it will be necessary to describe here at some length this far-famed Mathew, and his no less far-famed smithy.

Mathew Waldie was a strong, healthy, brown complexioned man, with a black shock head of hair, and intensely black eyebrows. He never wore hat or coat except on Sundays. His arms, the muscles of which were as distinct as spokes in a coach wheel, were always bare to the shoulders; and his shirt collar, thrown back over his neck, displayed a brown and brawny chest, indicative of surpassing strength.

Mathew, who reigned lord paramount of the village, executed all the smith work required for the mills and farms in the vicinity, and had often so many implements of various kinds sent in to repair from his numerous customers, that his workshop could not contain the half of them. On these occasions, the narrow street in which the smithy was situated, was often so quite blocked up with old carts, harrows, ploughs, and wheelbarrows, waiting Mathew's leisure, as to be all but wholly impassable. There were no rural police in those days, and although at times Waldie and his journeyman Cyclops might rush out to hurry these encumbrances and obstructions out of the way of the approaching mail, yet they were more frequently allowed to remain where they were, and when the guard was on such occasions questioned as to what had detained him, his answer generally was, "Waldie's smiddy." The answer was perfectly understood, but whether allowed to be a legitimate excuse or not, I do not exactly know. As to the interruption these accumulation of implements gave to the carts of the millers or farmers, Waldie gave himself no concern. In cases of this kind, the drivers themselves quietly stopped their horses, and as quietly proceeded to remove the obstructions without a word of complaint. Perhaps a respect for Mathew's character was the cause, in part at least, of this obliging conduct. But it was also known that the smith had a spark in his throat, and that he kept a greybeard of genuine Kilbagie, of which he was liberal in the distribution. This liberality, however, he confined almost exclusively to the hard working ploughmen and carters, not thinking there was any call on him to exercise the same hospitality towards their masters. Accordingly, when any of the more stingy of his employers called at the smithy for the purpose of urging on Waldie the necessity of a reduction on his rates of charge, the honest smith, while agreeing to the proposed alteration, always stipulated for a half-mutchkin, the price of which more than made up the deficiency. The landlord of the public-house opposite had acquired considerable wealth, and this chiefly, it was alleged, by Waldie's patronage. And the allegation did not look very like an untruth, for the drouthy smith might have been seen three or four times in the

course of a forenoon, entering the sanctum in company with some close-fisted farmer, or grippy laird, who congratulated himself on saving the very sum which Vulcan took care should be spent in his company. Notwithstanding this incessant dram-drinking, however, our friend was rarely ever intoxicated. His Herculean frame was surmounted by a strong head, and contained a sort of cast-iron stomach, on which liquid fire could make no impression.

"Waldie's smiddy," as what smithy is not, was the repository of all the news, and all the gossip, and all the tittle-tattle of the country side. Not that the smith himself was either a gossiper or a scandal monger, for Mungo Wood, the cartwright, Watty Birse, the cobler, and Mark Sprot, the tailor, were all better and louder talkers than the smith; but the very propensity to talking, for which these three worthies were so remarkable, rendered it necessary that they should have listeners. Accordingly, it was quite natural that in a winter's evening they should repair to the smithy, where they were always sure to find an audience. A very considerable portion of the smithy work was necessarily executed after nightfall. Broken coulters, loose harrow teeth, blunted spades, and a hundred other implements of husbandry, were all sent in to repair at night, being wanted early in the morning, and if not done, both horses and men would be thrown idle on the following day, fields left unploughed and unharrowed, and the wrath of the farmers excited to the highest pitch.

Waldie was thus always kept late in his workshop, and although the ringing of hammer and anvil was incessant, and deafening to unaccustomed ears, yet those who were in the habit of frequenting this rendezvous, could carry on a conversation with the greatest ease, even amid the loudest din of this dinsome place. To the smithy, accordingly, all the babbling clanjamphry of the village resorted at night, not to listen, for that, as before remarked, formed no part of their enjoyment, but to talk, to delight open eared and open mouthed ploughmen, millers, and labourers with their stories, having unfailingly amongst their audience our very worthy friend Halbert Flemyng, who, good soul, was to be found there almost every night, smoking his pipe, passing a sly joke on some small occurrence of the day, laughing at some witty story, or watching and waiting with considerable anxiety for the moment when the last heavy stroke on the anvil announced that the last of the broken utensils was mended, and that the bellows might gather breath till morning. Still, however, the honest miller sat fast; but it was merely till the smith had wiped his brow, dismissed his journeymen with a glass drawn from the far-famed greybeard, and sent off scampering to their homes the little ragged urchins who had been seated the whole night behind the fire. All this done, Mathew turned

up a wheelbarrow, and seating himself thereon, joined his quondam companions in their mirth and merriment.

The winter of 1794 had set in with great severity, and there had been a heavy fall of snow, which covered the whole face of the country. A very strong and piercing north wind had chased and drifted huge masses of the feathery flakes into the hollows, and the sharp peaked faces of the ridged and furrowed rocks peeped out here and there on the hill sides, as if determined to brave the cold and angry blast. The houses and streets of the village were all deeply coated with snow, making the streams of flour look dim and yellow. The little kailyards were all squared in and covered up. The haystacks on the neighbouring farms were also entirely covered in, save on the side exposed to the chilling wind, and little robin redbreast headed a a numerous host of starving field songsters, who boldly disputed with the cocks and hens for a share of their daily allowance of grain. The village boys were busily engaged in forming an enormous snowball, which they rolled up the steep brae, facing the storm with all the glee of youthful excitement. Anon they reached the summit of the hill. The snowball, now somewhat formidable in size and weight, was allowed to roll down in a new track, where it gathered an additional coating with every successive revolution. Then would the delighted urchins push each other over, and roll themselves headlong down the brae, arriving at the bottom almost as hardly caked and coated with snow as the ball they had just turned off from the summit. Then was there a shaking of little curly heads, a dusting and beating of little coats and trousers, with little close hairy caps. Then there was the delighted contemplation of the huge globe of snow they had created. Then came farther attempts to roll the ponderous mass along, which, however, lay obstinately still, defying all that kick and push and thrust could do. Then there was that delight of delights, a snowball bicker, the little red hands and rosy faces of the combatants appearing still more red and rosy when excited by exercise, and contrasted with the white and silvery snow. Other portions of the juvenile community, of more architectural tastes, and more staid habits, were busily engaged rearing little snow houses against the gable ends of their cottages. Shovels and spades of every description were in great requisition for this interesting work, and many a young sprig of genius, who might in due time have rivalled Sir Christopher Wren, had his constructive propensities checked, and his genius nipped in the bud, by the heavy thrashing inflicted on him for wearing away some inches of the point of the fire-shovel which usually ornamented the "*ben*" fireplace.

The ploughmen had been stopped in their operations, and had either

been amusing themselves with curling, or had been hanging idly about for weeks together. The mills were also stopped; the Water of Leith was frozen over, and, but for the recreation of curling, which had been keenly pursued at the damhead, and at Corstorphin pond, the peasantry, for miles round, would not have known what to make of themselves. But luckily a bonspeil, or match between the parishes of St Cuthbert's and Corstorphin, had been played on the loch or marsh of Corstorphin, and had been kept up for several days with amazing spirit. The clergymen of both parishes were keen curlers, and acted as *skippers* on the present occasion, with a zeal and enthusiasm which, perhaps, no other pursuit could have called forth. Both these reverend gentlemen were arrayed in cocked hats, knee-breeches, black silk stockings, silver knee-buckles, and seemed quite impervious to cold, and regardless of danger, while their venerable appearance added at once dignity to the scene, and life to the game. The besoms of these reverend curlers were always the busiest, their eyes the sharpest, their advice the soundest in directing the aim of the players. They knew, too, the weights, sizes, and tendencies of every *channel stane*, and were therefore the fittest persons to superintend all the important and scientific movements connected with *guarding*, *inwicking*, *raising*, and *chipping the winner*. Under their command, farmers and ploughmen, miller and millers men, all mingled freely together. No distinction of classes was recognised, and praises and honours were impartially distributed without consideration whether he who claimed them was man or master.

Curling is a game altogether peculiar to Scotland, and is admirably adapted for bringing out the more marked features of Scottish character as exhibited on joyous occasions; and no unpleasing sight surely it is to see the stalwart farmers, millers, and ploughmen of two parishes, headed by their respective ministers, engaged in a curling match. The ice bends beneath their firm tread, and springs up with elastic vigour after every one of those swinging movements that accompanies the discharge of the roaring stone. The laugh and the joke go round with a glee and good will known nowhere else, and they separate at the gloaming, wondering how the day should have been so very short. Skating is an amusement that may suit long-limbed dapper young bloods who have been accustomed to tripping on the light fantastic toe, but curling is the only game on the ice which is suited to the sagacious gravity, the quaint humour, and the "buirdly mak" of a Scottish peasant.

In the evenings the public-houses in the village were all well filled; the little drinking rooms, with their sanded floors, and white scoured chairs, all occupied. The voice of song and merriment was heard issuing from every door, lights were gleaming through the little half-closed shutters of every window, and little bells were tinkling in all direc-

tions. Many an honest housewife had set aside the untasted wooden bicker of Scotch kail, murmuring to herself as she did so, "Gin he haena gotten them to his dinner, he'll be blythe o' them to his supper. They'll help to cool his thrapple, het eneugh by this time, I warrant ye, wi' the wee drappie."

Mathew Waldie's smithy, as already stated, stood in the centre of the village, and the door faced the road which led up the hill to the northward. Thus, when Mathew and his men were all at work, every stroke of their hammers sent forth a broad stream of light, which falling on the long wheel-tracks, made them glance like lines of polished silver. In such cases the traveller on reaching the top of the hill, started back in alarm, the blaze from the smithy door suddenly flashing in his face, and the two long streams of light dazzling his eyes. These annoyances he generally sought to avoid, by winding down the steep and sloping pathway, when he either entered the smithy, and joined the jocund corps within, or passed on with a hearty "gude e'ening."

On such an evening as that I have been describing, in the month of December, of the year formerly alluded to, the usual coterie had assembled in Mathew Waldie's smithy. The Miller of Deanhaugh sat on the edge of a trough, and the smith, who had been busy all day roughing horse shoes, sat on an inverted wheelbarrow, with the greybeard in one hand resting on his knee, and a glass in the other. Three or four ploughmen and miller's servants were also present, some leaning on their elbows on benches, others seated on the smithy hearth, and all listening intently to an interesting story of Mark Sprot's, who was spokesman on the occasion. The story was finished, the smith gaped and roared, the ploughmen yelled, the miller's sides shook with laughter, and now the glass again went round, when the little tailor, encouraged by his success in tale-telling, volunteered a song; for, besides being a wit, he was also a rhymster in his own way, and had obtained considerable local notoriety by his poetical effusions.

No doubt much of this local fame had been achieved by the manner in which he had celebrated the virtues of his patrons and employers in the neighbourhood; but why should the poor rhyming tailor be censured for this, when many of his more distinguished brother bards overlard their patrons with the most fulsome adulations? This gift, as the talent for rhyming is sometimes called, made the tailor a welcome guest at many parties to which his rivals in story and song, the wright and shoemaker, were not invited; and when requested to sing, he was generally asked at the same time for something new. Strange the universal rage for novelty, and stranger still, how little of the genuine article in demand is produced after all. On this occasion the little tailor had something new in the poetical way, and, as the exultation depicted on

his humourous countenance indicated, it was something brilliant, as well as new. First, however, looking up in the miller's face—

"Deanhaugh," he said, "my sonsy man, wha's melder now hae ye stopped, makin' the frost an excuse?"

"Twa three melders, Mark, my man," replied the miller. "But there's no sae muckle matter for them, they belang to folk wha can want their meal awee. But I miss the mouter sair, that's the pity."

"Ay," said Sprot, "and so does the poor folk in the village. Mony a poor bodie's heart ye gladden, miller Flemyng. Your mouter fills mony a pock nook, and no even a mouse ever leaves your mill wi' a tear in its ee. The last night I was daundering down by the auld bigging, my heart warmed when I thought on ye, an' I couldna help singing to myself—

THE MILLER OF DEANHAUGH.

O ken ye the auld mill o' bonny Deanhaugh,
Whaur the wheel tears in tatters the wud waterfa';
Ye maunna rin by it, but pap in an' ca',
For blythe is the miller o' bonny Deanhaugh.

He maun hae his mouter, he maun hae his maut,
He taks muckle gowpins, but wha can find faut;
What he skims aff the fou dish, the toom get awa,
The poor bless the miller o' bonny Deanhaugh.

His hand is aye open to help poortith's woes,
Poor folk may want brogues, but they never want brose;
And gin stern oppression ower them shakes his paw,
He's felled by the miller o' bonny Deanhaugh.

It's gude to be muckle, its gude to be kind,
It's gude when a weak chield can boast a stout mind;
Gin strength succoured weakness, how blest were we a',
Heaven bless the stout Miller o' bonny Deanhaugh.

This song was received with loud applause, and the health of the miller was drank round in flowing bumpers. The honest smith was so much pleased with the little tailor's effusion, that he insisted on his taking another jorum, swearing that he was almost as good a song writer as Allan Ramsay, and adding, "That he didna see ony reason why a tailor in the Water of Leith should not make as good songs as a barber at the Cross of Edinburgh;" "besides, Mark," he continued,

" ye served your apprenticeship in the Luckenbooths, ye ken, an' picked up a heap o' lear frae the lawyers wha were wont to come about your master's shop; so what's to hinder you frae making sangs as weel as ony learned pow amang them."

" The rhyming fit has been strang on me lately," answered Mark, " and gin ye gie me a minute's time to draw my breath, I'll let ye hear a sang about yoursell, smith."

" What, Mark, a sang aboot me?" said Waldie; " what can ye sing aboot me? Wha e'er heard o' sic a thing as a sang aboot a drouthy blacksmith?"

" Ay, Mathew, my man," replied Mark, " but there are mair things nor your drouth that we can sing aboot; there's your sterling honesty, and your genuine kindness, qualities to be respeckit in whatever garb they may be arrayed. The blacksmith's penny aften gangs farther wi' a poor body than the laird's guinea; and the gift's aften maist freely gi'en by a hand that has grown baith black an' horny in the winnin o't."

" Right, again, Mark; 'od ye're a game ane," shouted the smith, slapping the poet on the back, and at the same time helping him to a jorum, " clear your thrapple wi' that, lad, an' let's hear what ye hae to say about me."

The poet nodded, emptied the glass, drew a long breath, wiped his mouth, and after a few preliminary hems, chaunted the following stave in honour of

THE DROUTHY VULCAN.

Come gather gude fellows,
An' joke till ye tire;
Gie breath to the bellows,
An' force to the fire.
Come pour forth your pith, as
Ye laugh at your lot;
An' mind ye the smith has
A spark in his throat.

Come seize the forehammer,
Now strong muirland Tam,
An' gaur the roof clamour,
Ye'll get a good dram.
Nor Tweed, Clyde, nor Nith, is
To you worth a groat,
Sae lang as the smith has
A spark in his throat.

Come a' ye wee bairnies
Baith duddy an' bare,
Jump up whaur the airn is,
An' warm yoursells there;
An' gin limb or lith is
E'er singed by a spot,
O mind ye the smith has
A spark in his throat.

O gin we but had a'
The cauld warld here,
We'd gie them a blaud o'
Our gude smiddy cheer;
We'd mak them a' blythe as
Our smiddy is hot,
Sae lang as the smith has
A spark in his throat.

This song finished, the smithy rung with loud shouts of approbation. Again the glass went round, again the poet's health was drunk, and again the excited tailor returned his warmest thanks for such unexpected honours. The miller complimented both the poet and the smith, by saying, "that he didna ken what a' the great bards had been about when they passed the Water o' Leith smiddy so often, without seeing the grist o' a gude melder."

"Ah," said the poet, "but it's no often we can get sic gude subjects to work on as you an' the smith, miller. Greed and glitter are mair plentyfu' than kindness an' honesty."

"A' true, tailor; but ye can gie greed an' glitter a sarcastic touch whiles," said the miller. "Didna ye mak a bit sang about Bessy Lee's wedding?"

"Aye did I," exclaimed the bard; "An' the greedy, glaikit gowks hae turned out just as I prophesied. They are like to tear ilk ither's een out."

"'Od, you rhymers are kind o' prophets, I think, Mark," exclaimed the smith. "Ye hae surely the second sight. How came ye by it? Can ye or will ye tell me?"

"That I cannot, then," said the poet, now full of his own importance. "These gifts come when we're no seeking them. Poetic feeling and poetic images arise in the mind, and flow forth frae the heart in words, in a manner which we can neither resist nor account for; and feeling as I do the fit on me just now, I can find relief only in singing.

BESSY LEE.

Jockie is decked in his braw ruffled sark,
Wi' siller buckles at ilka knee;
An' skips like a bird ower the lang grass park,
To show his grandeur to Bessy Lee.
An' pawky is he, an' pawky is she,
An' wow but they baith are ower lang free;
For diamond gaurs diamond in flinders flee;
Jockie is gleg, sae is Bessy Lee.

He was a warlock, an' she was a witch,
Glamour meets glamour, an' nane can see;
She took him for braw, he took her for rich,
Fowls of a feather thegither flee.
Jockie's a bridegroom, and Bessy a bride,
Weel may they sowther, an' weel may they gree;
But Jockie has nought to keep up his pride,
An' no ae bodle has Bessy Lee.

Why should ye tak in the lassie ye like?
Why wad ye feign what ye ne'er can be?
Gin ye canna help her out ower the dike,
Ye'd better wait till the yett's ajee.
Ye'd far better loot down and pu' the gowan,
Than seek for fruit frae a sapless tree;
Better no climb than come doun the hill rowin',
Wi' a stane round your neck like Bessy Lee.

The little tailor had scarcely finished this song, when the smith, who had been gazing intently up the road for some seconds, suddenly laid down the greybeard, and rushed out of the smithy. Flemyng and the others present followed to the door, and saw Waldie assisting a traveller to lead down the slippery roadway a horse whose shoes had not been prepared for the frost. It was a task of some difficulty, but was at length accomplished. Presently Waldie led the horse into the smithy, its owner following close behind.

This person, who was an entire stranger to all present, was a lean wiry man, muffled closely up in a great coat, and amply booted and spurred. While the stranger was unbuttoning his coat, and the smith was engaged blowing up the fire to roughen the horses shoes, the miller availed himself of the opportunity to examine him narrowly. His face was

rather of a mean cast; his nose was long and hooked; his eye quick and glancing. The superciliary ridges of his brow projected far forward, and his eyebrows were shaggy and blanched. His cheeks were thin; his mouth pursed all round, and drawn down firmly at the corners. He stooped a little, and looked of rather short stature, although, when he stood erect, he appeared a man of average height.

On first detecting Flemyng's eye fastened on him, he started suddenly back, but quickly resumed the same unconscious look with which he had entered the smithy. A glass of Waldie's cordial from the grey-beard was presented to him, but he merely put it to his lips. Then looking at the miller, he asked him if he had been long in the village.

"Some fifty-five years last June," replied the miller. "That is exactly my age, and I was born in, and have been all my life in the Water of Leith."

"Ah, indeed," said the stranger, "then the most of those who have resided in this locality almost at any time during that period will have been known to you, I presume."

"I should think so," interposed the tailor, "when he has been best man at the weddings of half the poor folk in the parish, and has some fifty namesons in the village."

"Indeed," said the stranger, "then it is fortunate that the state of my horses shoes prevented me passing the smithy, although I shall remember the rogue on my return who palmed such a sorry hack as this on me. But I beg pardon, sir," he added, turning to the miller, "can you give me any information about a person of the name of John Forrester, a millwright, who once resided in this village, whether he or any of his family be alive, and if so, where they reside."

"John Forrester! I knew him well," exclaimed the miller. "Poor fellow, there never was a more industrious or better principled man in the Water of Leith. His mother, poor old body, carried me to the kirk. Forrester himself wrought hard, too hard, poor man. It threw him into a consumption, which, in a short time, carried him off. With all his industry he had never been able to lay much past, and any little thing he had saved was consumed during his long illness. I did what I could to induce his widow to remain among us after his death, but she was a proud although a poor woman. The old landlord, the proprietor of Deanhouse, hard by here, although a good enough sort of man in his way, was anxious to have a millwright still in the shop, and, in consequence, ejected the widow from her cottage, to make room for one of that trade. The poor woman could not tolerate the idea of remaining within sight of the place where she had spent so many happy days, and she removed to Edinburgh, one of my carts carrying away her little furniture. She took a house in one of the High Street

closes, and continued there for some time, supporting herself by keeping lodgers, and by sewing. During this time I used to visit her frequently, being much interested in her welfare, and that of her little daughter, who was one of the most beautiful children I ever saw. Latterly, however, I lost sight of her for some time, and when I called one market-day at the house in which she had resided, I learned she had been visited by severe affliction, but had been succoured by some friend, who had got the child into an hospital, and had made some provision for the widow. The honest woman who was in the house, putting her apron to her eyes, said, 'she wished she kenned any body wha wad be so kind to her.' This intelligence made me less anxious about my friends, and from that day to this, I have heard nothing of them, although I have often expected they would have called on me. Are you interested in them, sir, may I ask?"

"Yes, warmly, deeply," replied the stranger, who seemed much affected by several parts of Flemyng's statement, "so much am I interested in their welfare, that my chief errand here was to endeavour to discover them. At this moment, however, I have not time to trace them out. But if you, sir, who seem to have been a kind friend to the family, could, without inconveniencing yourself, make the necessary inquiries to ascertain where they are, I should esteem it an especial favour. I am just now going to London, where I must be within four days from this date, being the bearer of important dispatches to Government from Holland. The vessel in which I came to Britain was driven by stress of weather into the Forth, and for safety run up as far as Queensferry, where I landed, and took horse for Edinburgh, with the view of starting from thence by to-night's London mail. I calculated, too, on thus having an opportunity of finding out poor Forrester, and the having met with you, therefore, I consider a very singular as well as providential circumstance. I have been detained by the frozen state of the roads, and the unprepared condition of my horse, fully two hours longer than I had calculated on, and have therefore little enough time left to overtake to-night's mail, which I understand starts from the Black Bull, Pleasance, at nine o'clock. If you should hear any thing of Forrester's widow and daughter, you will be kind enough to communicate with me by letter, and I shall leave you my address. I shall be back here in about a month from this date, when I shall be happy to remunerate you for any trouble and expense you may incur in this matter."

"My dear, sir," replied the honest miller, "I undertake the matter most cheerfully, and shall be but too proud to be the messenger of good to such deserving persons as Widow Forrester and her daughter."

"And I," said the smith, "will lend ye a helping hand. We'll

gang ance errand to Edinburgh thegither, and will endeavour to ferret them out by every means in our power."

"And I, too," exclaimed little Sprot, "will accompany you. Nane o' ye are half sae weel acquaint wi' the Auld Town as I am. I ken every hole an' bore about it, and gin we should fa' in wi' the bonny young lassie Forrester's daughter, I'll let ye see a poem on her, will rival the Gaberlunzie himsell, aye beat him oot an' oot."

"Well, my good sirs," said the stranger, leading his horse out of the smithy, "where the family have so many kind friends, I think there is no great fear of their being soon discovered. Farewell. If successful in your search, my friends, let me know, and inform the widow and her daughter, that their want and poverty are likely to be soon at an end. Farewell, again;" so saying, he mounted his steed, which now that its footing was sure, galloped down the main street of the little village at full speed, making the hard frozen road ring like Waldie's anvil when struck by the forehammer. The smith, the miller, and the tailor came to the smithy door, and gazed after the stranger, till he disappeared round one of the turns of the street. They then re-entered the smithy, resumed their confab, making a great many surmises as to who and what the stranger might be. Their next proceeding was to take a bumper each, to the widow's health, another to the child's health, a third to the stranger's health, and a fourth to their own healths, by which time they were all, as the reader may conjecture, pretty well served. The miller now lighted his pipe, and staggered to his feet: the smith had just strength enough left to put the greybeard into the press; the poetical tailor wended his way through the street in beautiful serpentine lines, and disappeared into his own door, attempting to sing his newest song,

"And mind ye the smith has
A spark in his throat."

CHAPTER II.

The bright sun o' simmer lights up the lang day ;
A cheery companion maks short the lang way ;
But there's nought lights the ee, or yet cheers up the heart,
As when ye are takin' some puir body's part.

Heart Motto.

The village of the Water of Leith never exhibited a more animated nor a more exciting scene, than on the morning after the occurrence of the incident recorded at the conclusion of the last chapter. What though the frost continued as keen as ever, and seemed determined either to banish fluids altogether, or to confine them to kail-pots, tea-kettles, and whisky barrels? What though the snow lay still in all its virgin whiteness, its purity rendered still more pure by the crystallizing agency of the all-searching frost? What although all attempts on the part of either boys or men to bake the crimp crystals into snow-balls were in vain? There were long clear polished slides made by the boys running from the top to the bottom of the hill, and on which slippery steep the urchins were keeping "the pudding het," and rolling over each other in all the recklessness of youthful glee. There was a ten-day's coat of ice on the damhead, strong enough to have borne the weight of a church, congregation and all. There were—good news to this meal-grinding community—rising markets to talk about. There were yesterday's curling matches to play over again in wordy discussion, and, more than all, in addition to these exciting and interesting topics, there was an incident, an occurrence, as uncommon as it was momentous, which excited the attention, and awakened the curiosity of every member of this little primitive community. This was the appearance of our three friends, the miller, the smith, and the tailor, at a very early hour in the forenoon arrayed in their best Sunday clothes, and all prepared for a journey. Some hours previous to this turn-out, little Sprot alone, dressed in his blue swallow-tailed coat, his tight smalls, light shoes, and narrow rimmed hat, had been seen skipping about the village, seemingly full of important business. He had been seen also knocking at Waldie's door, had been seen going into it, had been seen coming out again, and directing his steps to Deanhaugh Mill. In a short time thereafter, Waldie had been seen to cross to the smithy, also decked out in his Sunday coat, which, being a tremendously side and wide ar

ticle, was far from presenting what could be called a smart fit, although undeniably a good honest-looking garment. By and bye Flemyng and Sprot joined Waldie in the smithy, the miller looking uncommonly well, and walking with a step so stately, that all who knew him guessed there must be something important in the wind. His dress, too, was arranged with more than ordinary care, and the bright strips of his long-peaked vest seemed to gain additional brilliancy from the fresh and ruddy face of the wearer. His tight corduroy breeches, and clean tight-fitting rig-and-fur * stockings, together with the smart shoes that enclosed his comparatively small feet, gave him altogether at once a trig and jolly appearance, presenting a pleasing combination of strength and neatness, while the broad-rimmed, round-crowned hat, gave a quaker-like gravity to his countenance that commanded respect, and checked the disposition to smile, which otherwise his gay apparel might have excited.

Soon after the three friends had met in the smithy, and Waldie had given directions to his journeymen Cyclops, from which they might and did easily infer that they were to be their own masters for a day, they passed through the Water of Leith on their way to Edinburgh, a proceeding which both interested and puzzled the worthy villagers exceedingly.

"It's no for naething that Mark Sprot was sae soon asteer this morning," said one gossip.

"Atweel no," exclaimed another; "and it's nae sma' matter that maks Mathew Waldie put that thretty-year auld coat on in the forenoon, and gang awa to Edinburgh, leaving his wauff † callants to tak care o' his smiddy in sic a thrang day as this."

"I'll warrant ye," said a third, "there's something extraordinary in the wind when honest Deanhaugh is awa wi' them at this time o' day. As for Sprot, puir body, he'll gang a lang way for a dram an' a gossip at ony time, and the smith I hae seen set awa to Edinburgh on a market-day for a ramble afore now, but Halbert Flemyng is no the man to gang sae far frae hame at this time o' day without reason."

Ay, and there was good reason, as the honest woman said, why the kindly miller, the honest smith, and the no less kindly and honest tailor, should leave their homes at as early a period as possible, after having undertaken the task which the stranger, spoken of in the preceding chapter, had imposed on them. They were the bearers of a message of comfort and happiness to the widow and the orphan, and that of itself, even though the widow and orphan had been strangers, was enough to induce the Miller of Deanhaugh, and his kind-hearted companions,

* Anglicè ridge and furrow. † Worthless.

to use their best exertions to discover promptly those who were to be benefitted by their mission.

The three worthies passed on through the village, courteously returning the salutations and compliments with which they were greeted. But as they trudged on, many a question was put to them. Many an attempt was made to discover the object of their intended visit to Edinburgh, by the little powdered headed baker, by the butcher and publican, as they passed their respective shop doors, but all in vain. Flemyng moved in the van, laughing, shaking his head, and saying, "Bide a wee, you'll ken a' about it by and bye;" and Waldie pushed past the inquiring groups with his usual favourite and abbreviated phrase, "See gin night," an answer which he returned almost to every question put to him. The tailor gave one of his most knowing looks, and, with a smile, which said as plainly as smile could say any thing, "Stop till we come back and I'll gie ye a' the news;" and this was all the villagers could make out regarding the proceedings of these three distinguished persons.

So soon as the three friends had cleared the village, and were thus relieved from the inquisitive looks and questions of the villagers, they began to speak freely on the subject of their mission, and to indulge in the most pleasing anticipations regarding its results. They were now, indeed, all merriment and gaiety; and seeing that their purpose was a purpose of mercy, was it not right they should be merry and gay? They were apostles of the true faith. They were carrying comfort to the widow and the orphan. They were blessed in the heaven they felt in their own happy hearts, and was it not meet that the happiness they felt within should have a corresponding external expression? Why should the messengers of charity be disguised in long faces, and clothed in robes of sackcloth? Why should the joyous heart feign heaviness of spirit? Why should the bosom that swells, with generous aspirations, that flows full with the milk of human kindness, be chilled by cold looks—be repelled by stern frowns? What are the triumphs achieved by the hero of the battle-field? What the trophies engraven on a hundred marble columns, if these triumphs are gained by cruelty, if these trophies are soiled with blood? The reward of a good conscience, the happiness felt in the still, small, approving voice proceeding from the depths of a man's own bosom is worth a thousand gore-stained trophies.

Such feelings and emotions as those I have been alluding to, pervaded the bosoms of our three worthy friends, and their looks and manner gave ample indication of the happy excitement they felt. They had no doubts, no fears. They foresaw no difficulty in discovering the object of their sympathy. Nature herself seemed to smile upon them; and the winter sun which had been dimly seen far away amid

the thick and frosty atmosphere, now burst forth in dazzling splendour, dispelling the hazy clouds that had obscured the face of the sky, and thus appearing to cheer our friends on their way to dispel, by their kind sympathy, the clouds of sorrow that had gathered around the widow and her child.

When the friends had gained the summit of the little steep pathway, at the next turn of which their dear little village would be lost to their sight, they paused, rested, and looked down at the beautiful spot, with which all their nearest and dearest hopes were associated. On this occasion, however, their minds dwelt on another object, were engrossed by other thoughts. After a short pause they stepped onward, and in a few moments their eyes rested where their thoughts had for sometime already been, namely, on the Old Town of Edinburgh. And was not that a sight worth gazing on? A landscape gleaming with light and beauty.

The gigantic and veteran Castle rose proudly from his perpendicular base of rock, and was, at this particular season, and on this particular day, one of the most striking and romantic objects conceivable. The wretched cotton-mill looking barrack with which it is now crowned, did not then deform and disfigure the finest point in that singular fortress. The buildings were all old, irregular, and castellated; and barracks, walls, drawbridges, guns, projecting pieces of rock, sharp-pointed towers and turrets, were marked with patches of snow, making the old and weather-beaten castle look still more old and weather-beaten. The warmth of the previous day having partially dissolved the snow, it now hung in long gigantic icicles from every projecting point on roof and rock. The sun's rays came slanting from the south, and as these huge icicles, and the half crystalized snow flashed in their light, it seemed as if the whole castle, buildings, rock and all, were clad in a complete panoply of steel. The long line of tall buildings that crowned the High Street, as seen stretching away in lessening perspective, were shining and gleaming in a similar manner, till they disappeared in a dim cloud that rose in the east, and in the bosom of which the Calton Hill, Holyrood House, and Salisbury Crags lay shrouded.

The travellers passed on their way, warily picking their steps as they descended the acclivity at that time known by the name of the Kirkbrae-head, a name derived from its proximity to the Church of St Cuthbert's, the burying ground of which ran close by the road-side. A churchyard is at all times suggestive of solemn reflections; hence it was, that the mirth of the party was instantly checked, when the snow covered hillocks of earth burst on their sight. There were, at the moment, two rusty veterans employed in digging a grave, and the black mould as it was shovelled out, appeared still blacker when contrasted

with the snowy bed on which it lay, suggesting the idea of the black seal of death as stamped on the unstained page of youth, beauty, and purity. Expressions of merriment in such a place, and at such a time, jar the feelings, and grate on the ear. Its discordance with the scene around is offensive, and so felt our three friends on hearing a merry peal from the ancient grave-diggers, as they pursued their dismal occupation. On hearing it, the miller instantly ceased speaking, the smith started back, and the tailor looked aghast. Again they walked on, and presently had passed along the little road which then closely skirted the base of the castle rock. Before approaching the Grassmarket, however, they all three, as if by one consent, stood suddenly stock still. A momentous question had arisen in the minds of all simultaneously, and now for the first time,—How were they to discover Widow Forrester? Where were they to seek for her? Strange that they had not thought of this before—strange that it was only now as they approached the end of their journey, they began to perceive that the discovery of Widow Forrester might be a work of some difficulty. The honest miller and his trusty companions, however, were not the first who had set out on an expedition, without calculating or counting on all the difficulties of their enterprize. Alas! alas! how many thousands of our countrymen every year leave their native land, hoping to find on some far distant shore that happiness which they had in vain sought for at home. How often on their arrival at the Eden of their imagination, do they find misery and strife when they had expected peace and comfort? How often after all their searching do they find that they have been longing after an ideal paradise not to be found on earth?

The companions had reached the middle of the Grassmarket before they had come to any resolution with regard to their future proceeding, or had determined on the direction they should take. Here, however, they could not stand long without being recognized and accosted, for this was the market-day for corn, and although, at that particular season of the year, there was little victual to dispose of, yet there were always a number of farmers who congregated together on these days, whether they had any business or not, just by way of gossiping over the list of prices, or to supply themselves with as much of the tittle tattle of the day, as would serve to keep their winter night firesides in talk for a week to come. There was also another cause for their coming to town on these occasions, and one that operated still more powerfully than either of those just mentioned. This was the weekly dinner, the weekly jorum, and the weekly comfortable ride home on the well fed, heavy-footed, long-tailed horse, who was equally at home in gig, plough, cart, and saddle.

Although, as already said, this was the victual market-day, it was not Miller Flemying's. The meal-market, in which alone he was interested, was held in another quarter of the town, and on a different day. But although Deanhaugh had no business to do in the victual market, what did that signify? What did it matter? Was there a farmer there who was not intimately acquainted with the miller, who did not respect the honest smith, and who did not love to listen to the poetic and talkative tailor. Was it to be expected, then, that such friends could meet in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, in the middle of a winter day, and separate without their "twal hours." Was such an occurrence as that of Mathew Waldie's being seen so far from his smithy, to be allowed to pass without due celebration? No such idea could for a moment be tolerated. There was no particular reason why the miller and tailor should be installed into the honours and mysteries of the market fraternity. They were often enough in town, and were not, moreover, remarkable for deep potations. But the smith had a spark in his throat,—a perpetual thirst, no doubt superinduced by the melting heat of the smithy in which he wrought; and when the amazing quantity of liquor which Waldie swallowed was talked of, Mathew used to remark, that "folk spak o' his drinkin', but they didna consider his drouth." An answer which proves Mathew to have been a practical philosopher, who was able to trace effects to their causes.

Besides the general joy at seeing the smith in town, of itself more than sufficient cause for an adjournment, the day was very cold. The thermometer was below zero, and the mercury apparently deprived of all its mercurial qualities, lay inert, dead and heavy, like a mass of lead at the bottom of the tube. Now, if the human body requires to be kept cool by a *cooler* in a boiling summer heat, is it not according to the genuine principles of natural philosophy, that the same body should be kept always as near the same temperature as possible? And is not this principle sufficient reason why a few drops of the same fiery fluid should be administered in a cold winter day to those bodies, which require to have their temperature lowered by the same fluid in the heat of summer? Acknowledging this recognised principle, though without giving themselves the trouble to reason on it, as I have done, some half dozen of the farmers and the three friends went into a little low roofed, low linteled public house, took possession of the largest of the little rooms, and soon had before them the landlady's large bottle, from whence every man helped himself, and by the aid of which inspiring cordial, the whole company were soon involved in a very lively conversation. In a short time it became evident to all that our worthy little friend Sprot was getting elevated. His little head was thrown

ajee, his arms crossed, and one of his little legs thrown over the other in an attitude of easy independence. In this position, he sat listening with a complacent smile to what was passing, stroking his chin the while with forefinger and thumb. When he spoke, his accent was observed gradually changing, till it had assumed a fine high flavoured English tone, and he now began to make remarks on men and things, at once novel and striking, and not the less so, that they were perfectly unintelligible to the poor farmers. He began to talk of the earth's rotundity, called the moon "gentle Luna," and raved of this luminary in such a way as to excite a suspicion amongst his honest auditors that the creature himself was not altogether free from lunar influences. He talked politics, too, with all the off-hand fluency of a thorough master of the craft; nay, as if he were familiar at Downing Street, and was hand in glove with the prime minister. The war on the Continent was the next subject he touched on, and of this he spoke as if he had fought in each and all of the battles that had taken place there, and insinuated as much as if he had walked the quarter-deck with Rodney and Howe. Now all this was exeeedingly amusing, and however anxious the miller, the smith, and the farmers might have been to shorten the sederunt, the little fellow became so entertaining, that no one could find it in his heart to interrupt him. So there they sat, the miller for the time oblivious of the object of his journey, excepting when the smith gave him a half knowing look, opened his ponderous jaws and uttered his favourite phrase, "See gin night." And night did threaten to overtake them, for the afternoon began to get thick and foggy, and the day seemed anxious to draw to a close sooner than usual, that our merry friends might have the benefit of closed shutters and lighted candles; but the appearance of the landlady with the latter aroused the company to a sense of the time they had consumed, and the reckoning being discharged, the farmers repaired to their different inns to dine, or to get their horses, while our three friends, the miller, smith, and tailor, proceeded on their voyage of discovery arm in arm, sociably and lovingly banded together.

Although Mrs Forrester had removed from the house in which she had resided when Flemyng had been in the habit of calling on her, he thought it best to make his way there first, when perchance some old neighbour might know something of her present residence. Accordingly, the trio passed up the West Bow, and down the High Street, descended the steep alley called Bell's Wynd, ascended to the top of the long spiral stair, and knocked at the door of the house in which the widow had formerly resided; but the Miller, to his great disappointment, found that the house had changed tenants even since his last visit, and that the present occupant knew nothing whatever of Widow Forrester.

The good woman, however, took care to inform them, that she had got a dirty house to come into, and that "neither Mrs Forrester nor any other mistress who had inhabited the house at any time during the last century," had had "ony respeck for cleanliness; for she had haen dirt to clean awa that had ta'en, she believed, a hunder year to gather. Thae wa's," continued the loquacious lady, "when I cam here, were as black as coal. Now, ye see, Sir," looking at the miller, whose jolly presence had caught her eye, "they're as white as your sark neck, Sir."

Glad to escape from this torrent of eloquence, the miller slipped a shilling into the honest woman's hand, and pushing his companions down before him, they descended to the flat beneath, where they repeated their inquiries, but with no better result. The same success attended their efforts in the other flats, and down they tumbled at last into the close, laughing heartily at the reception they had met with, although not a little disappointed at their being unable to gain any tidings of those they sought. Alas! how many proofs are we doomed to meet with in every day's experience of the general forgetfulness of man? What a short time elapses ere the place that knew us knows us no more.

Our three friends now proceeded up the close toward the High Street, and as they did so, their attention was attracted by a rich and savoury smell issuing from the back-door of one of the taverns that fronted the street just named. The door stood invitingly open—so at least thought the smith—so thought the miller—and so apparently thought the tailor; for, without exchanging a word with each other, they all stumbled one after the other into the low-browed doorway. No doubt the clean well sanded floor had its influence in inducing them to enter; and a hankering after a little more stimulant, might also be operating towards the same end. But hunger was the chief cause of their simultaneous and almost involuntary movement. They were all sharp set, their previous potations having whetted their appetites amazingly. And when the delightful sounds of broiling steaks saluted their ears, and the grateful odour disseminated by this process touched their olefactory nerves, they determined not to move another step, all-important as they felt the business they had in hand to be, till they had swallowed what the miller modestly called a "mouthfou o' meat."

There was also another consideration which had its share in inducing them to this determination. This was the necessity for a long and deliberate consultation, before they could proceed any farther in their search for Mrs Forrester, with any hope of success. Had it been in the Water of Leith, they knew well that the house where the widow had removed to would be as well known to all the gossips of the village as

Waldie's smithy, but in the middle of a large and densely populated town like Edinburgh, there is no such familiarity; and it has been well said, that a man can live nowhere so much alone as in the middle of a large town. Indeed, people have been known to live on the same stair-head in some of the eight-story houses of the High Street for twenty years, and, during all that period, have never exchanged words together. At one period, I, myself, fond as I am generally of country life, was so convinced that a large town was the best place to enjoy solitude, and at the same time have the social affections excited, that I composed the following ode on the subject.

ODE TO SOCIAL SOLITUDE.

I woo thee not, sweet Solitude,
Within the thick leaf-woven wood,
Where robed in grey, or veiled in green,
E'en day's bright beams are scantly seen;
Save where the bubbling furze-fringed stream
Glides trickling in one silver gleam;
Sparkling with light e'en in such mood,
As I woo Social Solitude.

I woo thee not in rocky dell,
Where darkness rests, and shadows dwell;
Where, born amid the shaggy hills,
Young rivers rise from rippling rills;
Where up black crags green tendrils creep;
Where gold-eyed flowerets half-hid peep;
Where moss couch tempts the fairy brood,
But wins not Social Solitude.

I woo thee not, when cold moonlight
Chastens the stars, that twinkle bright;
When sky, and sea, and hill and dale,
Are with a glory silvered pale;
When o'er man's slumbering hopes and fears,
The gliding stream seems shedding tears;
Lets leave the spot—since it were rude
To wake such solemn solitude.

I woo thee not, when vapours cold
Wrap up the mountain summit bold;
Or, when the howling tempest raves,
And wakes to life the sleeping waves
Which lash with light heaven's brow so dark,
Tossing in sport the creaking bark;
Such stormy strife must be subdued,
Ere you can feel sweet solitude.

I woo thee not in Highland cot,
Where Nature's all but God-forgot;
Where o'er the wild and dreary waste
No mark of human culture's traced;
Where, shivering at the low-browed door,
You see the inmates, wan and poor,
Meagre and thin, and scant of food,
Such, such alas! their solitude.

I woo thee in the busy street,
Where every face and form we meet
Presents a study; where the crowd
All jostle close, and clamour loud;
Where jarring feud and ceaseless din,
Make the soul seek the calm within;
And deep with social love imbued,
The heart expands in solitude.

I woo thee mid the pent-up throng,
Where Time's dark tide that rolls along,
Rushes into the shoreless sea,
That circles vast eternity;
That tide so swollen with storm and strife,
So strewn with wreck of human life,
Proclaims that mercy must be sued,
When man meets God in solitude.

Then, holy social feeling hail;
Why should the cheek grow wan and pale?
May not health's blessings be combined
With feeling heart and thinking mind?
Midst stir of life must still be sought,
All gen'rous love, all manly thought;
And mankind's universal good,
Must spring from Social Solitude.

To resume.—Our three friends, after passing through a long narrow passage, were shewn into an apartment about ten feet square, containing three different boxes or separate compartments, besides the publican's bar, which occupied one of the corners. At the upper end of the room, and occupying almost its entire breadth, glowed a huge fire, on which lay an enormous gridiron, covered with hissing, dripping beefsteaks, which a tidily dressed, but very red faced, landlady, was busy turning with a pair of tongs, heedless at once of the melting heat, and noisy voices of her customers assailing her from all quarters of the house (for on market-days they poured in upon her in continuous streams), indifferent to every earthly thing, in short, but the crackle of the glorious steaks, in the cooking of which to perfection lay the chief pride and glory of the buxom mistress of "The Hole i' the Wa'." * On and on the goodwoman went, turning and turning again the savoury morsels, all hissing and dripping, and fuming on the ample gridiron; now she lifted them high in air, now gave them another finishing touch of the fire, and now, with dexterous movement, consigned them to a large wooden platter, piping hot, brown and juicy. No daintier dish could be set before either a king, or any body else, than a beefsteak, served up on that wooden platter, cooked by that most indefatigable and enthusiastic professor of the culinary art, honest Lucky Middlemas, who was so alive to the fame of her establishment, and to the comfort of her customers, that if an overdone spot, or burnt corner, appeared on any one of the numberless steaks she cooked on a market-day, she used to say she would rather it had been on her own hand. Nay, so accustomed was she to the performance of this duty with her own hands, that when, after a hard day's work, she had retired rather early to bed, if, at a late hour, some hungry customers came in and ordered a steak, the instant her ear caught the well known sound, she would rush into the kitchen all arrayed in her night dress, dash aside the servant girl, seize her favourite tongs, cook the steak, and when done, hurry off to bed again, saying, "That she couldna thole† to hear them burning good meat into cinders." It was alleged, indeed, that, occasionally after a three hours roasting of this kind, she took a little of something sharp, but, if she did, she both required and deserved it; for, as the smith remarked sympathizingly, "Nae human being could last at sic wark without moistening the clay a bit."

Mrs Middlemas's husband was a little, lean, sharp-nosed man, with a very small forehead, two little grey twinkling eyes placed very near to each other, and a little thin-lipped mouth, which was spread out into a perpetual simper. He was generally arrayed in a short white jacket, having his waist begirt with a long white apron, and was amazingly ac-

* Hole in the Wall. † Endure.

tive and alert in the duty of attending on and supplying the wants of customers. He heard and answered, quick as lightning, the faintest tinkle of every bell, the feeblest call of every voice; and, with the rapidity of thought, laid down and removed knives, forks, platters, bottles, glasses, and all the other paraphernalia of the table.

His intervals of attendance on customers he spent in his little bar, employed in wiping glasses and measures, which it was his delight to keep bright and clean, ready for immediate use. Never, in truth, was seen such amazing industry, such unwearied assiduity. The "Yes, sir," "Coming, sir," "Eighteenpence, sir," issued from that prim little mouth so quietly, that you could hardly tell whence the sounds came. Quietly, too, was the money slipped into the little pocket in front of the little apron, quietly was the change offered back to the customer, quietly was it again slipped into that little pocket, and with as quiet a "thank ye," and as quiet a bow, did the little landlord convey his guests to the door, and again glide into his little bar, to resume his quiet, patient, unending labour.

On entering Lucky Middlemas' our three friends took possession of a side of one of the boxes, formerly alluded to, which were so narrow, that parties on the opposite side had to sit with their knees dovetailed, as it were, into each other. The box our friends entered was the one nearest the fire. Waldie, as being fire-proof, taking the seat directly facing the glowing furnace, to which he adverted, saying, that "it was het aneugh to melt whunstanes, let a be airn." Opposite, and around them on all sides, were butchers and farmers busy eating, talking, and drinking. The little active landlord of "The Hole i' the Wa'," quickly placed before our friends a large wooden platter of hot juicy steaks, and a large plate of smoking potatoes, accompanied by a saucer of pickled red cabbage, and on these savoury viands the three companions soon made a hearty and most satisfactory meal. After eating comes drinking, and although the raw alcohol, or "cauld straik," as the smith called it, was more congenial to his taste and habits than toddy, yet, as the company opposite them in the box was drinking this well known beverage, our Water of Leith worthies, in order to be what they considered neighbour like, determined on having toddy also. A capacious jug was accordingly placed before them, together with the necessary materials for a browst; the smith officiated as brewer, and they were soon on terms of intimacy, not only with the party immediately opposite them, but with all who were in the room. The tailor, as usual, was the tongue of the trump, and the sound of his little shrill voice was soon heard through every corner of the apartment. By and bye farmers began to drop off, butchers to steal away, one after another, yet did our friends keep their seats, and, although listeners were few, the

little loquacious tailor kept talking on, to the great delectation of the smith, the miller, and last, but not least, the fat landlady of "The Hole i' the Wa'," who, now her cooking was over, had taken possession of an empty box, where she sat, wiping the perspiration from her fine, fat, clear, open face.

As the party were thus sitting and thus enjoying themselves, a stentorian voice suddenly bawled in at the door—

"Ony coals wanted the night, leddy?"

"Atweel no, Jock, the last ye gi'ed me were a' stanes," said Lucky.

"Aye, but thae's frae a new pit, and are diamonds—real diamonds mem," answered Jock, "break like shortbread, and bleeze up like tow."

"What, Jock Thomson, is that you?" interrupted the miller, "come awa in man, an' let's see your sooty phiz."

Jock required no second invitation, but stalked into the apartment, his fragment of a hat in one hand, his excuse for a whip in the other, and looking at the miller with a strange admixture of gravity and suppressed humour, exclaimed—

"Mextyfou* me, Denhaugh, are ye here."

Before proceeding further with our story, I would beg to introduce our new and worthy friend "Coal Jock" to the reader, through the medium of a poetical description, which I have thought well adapted to the purpose of giving a knowledge of his character, commensurate with his importance to our tale.

COAL JOCK.

King o' the coal mine, dingy Knight,
Wi' phiz sae grim, an' ee sae bright,
Stand still, ye black an' coomy† fright,
I'll jot ye down;
Syne bawl awa' wi' a' your might,
An' wake the town.

The goods ye vend, the claes ye wear,
Are like their owner, unco queer;
Hat, coat, an' breeks, a field wad clear
O' starving jays;
While cart an' horse might swarf wi' fear
A' Britain's faes.

* Anglicè, Mercy on us. † Small coal dust.

When was there e'er a word o' truth,
Cam frae that muckle, thick-lipped mouth;
That burning wi' a stounding tooth
Dries up your craigie,*
An' gapes wi' a perpetual drouth
For dear Kilbagie.

Drink less, an' feed your naigie better,
Mony a corn-bing ye're its debtor;
Poor brute, it needs nae rape or fetter
To tie it up,
At yillhouse doors a patient waiter
On your "gee! hup!"

The poor auld brute's bow-houghed an' blin',
Sharp-pointed banes shine through its skin;
Its mar'less shoon are worn as thin
As Queen Anne coins;
An' O, it's scant o' pith an' win'
To climb steep wyn's.

Your sair patched cart sae jolts an' reels,
Wi' squeaking trams, an' creaking wheels,
An' flings sae aft your horse's heels,
High up in air,
That no a passer by but feels
Baith grieved an' sair.

I kenna how ye pass the tolls,
Or raise the wind to pay your coals,
Among the needy, naked shoals
That winter cruel
Sends crawling forth, frae cauld bleak holes,
To grawl for fuel.

Ah! what a batch o' shivering wretches,
Here cower in rags, or limp on crutches,
Ane, wha wad fain hae been a duchess,
Now sair disjaskit,†
Gathers sma' coals, and vends braw mutches,
A' in ae basket.

* Throat. † Squalid.

Anither shows some glittering toys,
Wi' dolls for girls, and balls for boys;
Plays on a trump, its pleasing noise
Delights John's ear,
An' aff he bears his penny prize,
His nag to cheer.

Ane o' the street musician crew
Is busy priggin' wi' him now,
An' twa auld sangs he swears are new,
He pawns on Jock,
For an auld hod o' coals half-fou,
A weel matched troke.*

There's an auld totterrin', broke down dandy,
At picking pouches ance so handy,
Led by a brazen, red-faced randy,†
Wha gi'es to Jock
Three papered sticks o' Lunnon candy,
To fill her pock.

An auld tar, wi' a cloutit jacket
An' wooden limb, comes wi' his backet;
Offers a penny, ye maun tak it,
He's just anither
To buy a quid, his credit's crackit,
So dinna swither.‡

Here comes a genty, cleanly, grannie,
Wi' sma' coal tub, an' wee meal cannie;
Ye canna weel refuse her penny,
It's e'en her a',
Yes, fegs, ye'll fill her tub, an' winna
Tak aught ava.

Let him wha scowls on sic as thee
But come an' watch thy tricks like me;
He'll aye find some redeeming plea,
Some kindly feature,
To gaur him gaze, wi' brighter ee,
On human nature.

* Barter. † Termagant scold. ‡ Hesitate.

Puir, wairdless* wretch, ye'd need anither,
Wi' stern rebuke your heart to wither;
For me, I'm blythe to halt and swither
Afore I fyke† ye;
I feel I'm e'en a failing brither,
An' far ower like ye.

Alack, alack! crime's never scant
Amang the pale-faced sons o' want;
Yet grit folk shouldna gape an' gaunt,
An' shake their pows,
But something frae their pantries grant
To feed toom mou's.

'Tis poortith's keen an' withering blight,
That gi'es to crime its greatest might;
Help want, an', oh! temptation's light
To beg or steal;
Then pity poortith's wretched plight,
An' feel, oh! feel.

Hail Charity! thou heavenly guest,
Come make thy home in every breast;
Till every heart inspired and blest
With friendly love,
Man makes this earth a land of rest,
Like heaven above.

From this sketch, it will be seen, that John, uncouth as was his exterior, was far from being destitute of the finer feelings of humanity, although, indeed, these were strangely mingled up with the coarse habits and failings of his class. His honesty, strictly speaking, was questionable; and, on one occasion, he is said to have confessed to a confidential friend, that he had tried the honest way two successive days, and had lost a crown by the trial. His wit, although coarse, was pointed, as was exemplified by his remark to some official who found fault with him for not having his name painted on the side of his wretched cart. On that occasion Jock pointed to some incomprehensible chalk marks on the rough sides of the tram, and exclaimed, "Do ye no see that, man? J for Jock, an' T for Thomson, and twa scores for twa. You ignoramus, can ye no read caulk?" and so saying, Jock drove off triumphantly.

The finer touches of humanity that were mingled up with this man's

* Reckless. † Trouble.

character had, perhaps, been more fully developed than they would otherwise have been by the example of the Miller, in whose employment he had been before he took up the coal trade, in which he was now engaged. The change from white to black is not, after all, so great as the vulgar suppose, those skilled in such matters having ascertained that there is no colour in either; but whether John, when he changed from miller to coal carter, had a knowledge of this scientific discovery is doubtful. One thing, however, is certain, Flemyng had not dismissed him without cause; and equally certain is it, that "the collier's bonny daughter," whether she of song notoriety or not, I am not prepared to say, had a share in making John change the scene of his operations from the Water of Leith to Gilmerton.

Now, it so happened, that "Coal Jock" was the identical man who had driven the cart that conveyed Widow Forrester and her little household-furniture to Edinburgh from the Water of Leith, and it occurred to the miller, whenever he heard Jock's voice, that in his usual daily and nightly perambulations through the city, he might have seen or heard something of her. Accordingly, after some preliminary matter had been discussed, and while Jock was busy devouring a steak which the miller had ordered for him, the latter said—

"Noo, Jock, my man, how's the coal trade gaun on?"

"Just so and so," answered Jock. "The puir folk are a' out o' wark wi' this frost, an' hae nae siller to buy coals at the very time they need them maist; so, unless I gi'ed them awa for naething, I couldna toom a cart in a week."

"By the bye, Jock," exclaimed the miller, "didna ye used to serve Widow Forrester wi' coals when she stayed in Bell's Wynd?"

Jock replied in the affirmative.

"Do ye ken whaur she lives now?" said the miller.

Jock in a tone, and with a look betokening much kindly feeling, replied, "I saw either hersell, puir body, or her wraith yestreen, miller, or I never saw ony thing."

"Whaur?" exclaimed the latter, with eager curiosity.

"At the head o' the Canongate," answered Jock. "I would swear it was her, although she didna seem to ken me, nor wish to be seen. She was mufiled up, wi' her hood drawn close ower her head, so that I couldna see her face, yet I kenned her. It was the dusk o' the gloaming, too, but her voice rang through my heart when she askit for a pennyworth o' coals; an' I e'en filled her tubbie, an' wadna hae taen the penny, but I kenned her proud heart wad hae bursted had she thought I kenned her."

"What, Jock!" said the miller, with painful surprise, "ye dinna mean to say she's destitute?"

"No, no, may be no destitute a'thegither," answered Jock. "I wadna say a'thegither destitute, but very ill aff. She used to get her coals frae me, ye ken, when she staid in Bell's Wynd. I used to credit her frae the tae week's end to the tither, and never lost a plack by her. She was aye very kind to me, puir body, and used to crack wi' me about auld times; and, in a cauld day, gin she had the kail-pat on, I aye got a bowlfu'. I hae thus gude cause to mind her; and although I haena seen her for years till last night, nor knew whaur she had moved to, I kent her again, at first glance, as weel as gin I had only parted wi' her an hour before."

"Well, John," exclaimed the miller, "I am glad ye hae sae muckle gude feeling in your heart. Finish your bit steak, man, and help us to drink our toddy. Keep ye a gleg look-out for Mrs Forrester, and when she comes to ye again for coals, say ye ken her, and tell her that I hae gude news till her, and that I wish her to ca' on me as soon as she possibly can."

"Palavering is no a'thegither in my line," said Jock, "but I'll tak my stand every night for a while to come in the same place whaur I saw her last, an' gin she comes again, happit up in the same way, I'll ca' her her by her name, an' see gin she'll answer."

This arrangement completed to the satisfaction of all parties, the miller and his friends thought it unnecessary, as, indeed, it would be useless, to seek after the widow any more that night, seeing that they had no clue whatever to her place of residence. They, therefore, resolved to prolong their sederunt. Jock drew in a long three-legged stool, and sat at the end of the box, as if he had been chairman of the company, his whip buckled round his shoulder, and his hat lying beside him on the floor; what might become of his poor horse, his cart, and his coals, being seemingly a matter of no concern whatever to him. Perhaps his best hours for effecting sales had not yet arrived; or, perhaps, Jock, at that moment, preferred the company of Flemyng to all the horses and carts in Edinburgh. Be this as it may, however, there he sat, and there the miller and his friends sat, talking of the widow, her daughter, and of the mysterious stranger, who had expressed such an interest in them, till a pretty late hour, when they rose to depart all pretty much elevated.

On the party reaching the top of the close, honest John Thomson was somewhat alarmed, although, apparently not much surprised, to find that his horse and cart had been removed. He knew well that the animal never would have stirred of its own accord, and as well did he know that none of all his numerous customers in the High Street of Edinburgh would have taken them away. Thievery, in those days, was a genteel profession: its members being all, ostensibly, at least

CITY GUARD HOUSE

gentlemen, who scorned the shabby, petty pilfering of modern times. It was thus Jock knew that his cart and horse and coals were safe, at least from street depredators; and he had, therefore, little difficulty in tracing them out. He knew, in fact, that they were in possession of his old friends, the City Guard; and, accordingly, after making a few remarks on this venerable body, in language which I don't choose to repeat, he hastened up the street to the guard-house, dragging along with him his friend, now, indeed, his sworn brother, Mark Sprot, and followed by the miller and the smith.

The City Guard were, at this time, the only conservators of the public peace in the city, and they ruled the lower orders, and especially the juvenile portion of the community, with a rod of iron. Many a *clamhewit*, with their Lochaber axes, did they bestow on the defenceless sconces of the lieges, although those who were either strong enough to frighten, or rich enough to bribe them, had no difficulty in ridding themselves of their attentions. The uniform of this body consisted of a cocked hat, edged with white, which they generally wore a little ajee, giving them a sort of jaunty air, at once consequential and ludicrous. A red coat, with blue facings; breeches and waistcoat of red; broad buff belts, and long black gaiters, with leaden buttons, that reached to the knee. They were armed with muskets on great occasions, but the weapon they carried on ordinary duty, was a long Lochaber axe. The corps was almost entirely composed of Highlanders, many of whom had served in the celebrated Black Watch, now the 42d Regiment; and they had all a strong dash of military hauteur in their general bearing, with the closeness and acquisitiveness for which the Celts are generally remarkable. Thus were they partly feared, partly respected, and partly laughed at by the citizens, who were as much displeased with their meanness as amused by their eccentricities.

The guard-house, at the particular period alluded to, formed part of the old jail or Heart of Mid-Lothian, and the first thing our friend Coal Jock saw, on arriving within sight of the guard-house door, was his horse fastened by the halter to a huge iron ring rivetted in the wall.

On perceiving the predicament of his good steed, Jock immediately proceeded to loosen the halter from the ring, a process which he accompanied with sundry very pithy exclamations, while his friend Sprot kept patting the old horse, holding on the while by one of the cart trams, and evidently quite satisfied that "all was right." Scarcely, however, had Jock accomplished his purpose, and begun to lead off the animal, with the accustomed "Gee, up," when out rushed four or five of the invincible guard, who, after pouring a shower of blows on Jock, seized both him and little Sprot, dragged them into the guard-house, and, without any ceremony, thrust them into a dismal dungeon

of a place, called the Black Hole—a place well worthy a detailed description, but which, having more important matters on hand at present, I must leave to some future historian.

The capture of the two worthies was so quickly managed that the smith and miller had no time to interfere in their behalf. All they could do was to go into the guard-room, and ask the reason why their friends had been carried into captivity.

"Did you'll not saw't how it was, humph?" shouted a huge fellow, who, from his shoulder-knots, seemed either a corporal or serjeant.

"As to Coal Jock," replied the honest smith, "it may be a' fair aneuch; but what right hae ye to tak up wee Mark Sprott? What ill was he doing?"

"She'll be here to do her duty, an' no to be catacheezed by you," answered the official with great dignity.

"By me? Do ye ken wha I am?" asked the smith.

"No. Her nainsell keeps nae company wi' common tredsmen," answered the corporal, proudly.

"D——n the fallow," shouted the smith. "Does he mean to ca' Mathew Waldie o' the Water o' Leith smiddy a common tradesman?"

"Don't be tamin' me, my frient," said the corporal; "She'll no be tamn't by you nor nopodies; and if you'll say another word, she'll clap you in the black hole, aside your frients till ta mornin'."

"Its no in your buik, man, nor in that o' a' the Highland stirks ye hae about ye, to clap me into your ash-pit," replied the smith. "Here's Deanhaugh an' me able an' ready to clear the bink o' ye, an' lick a dozen o' ye into the bargain; so ye needna draw doun your lang, shelty, shaggy eebrows at me, as gin you could eat me. Ye wad find me gay an' tough to chow, I'm thinkin'. Wad ye like friend to smell your norland blood?"

"D—n your blut," exclaimed the corporal fiercely. "Would you'll daur put your sooty smitty blut in comparison wi' the pure blut o' a Ross, or a Campbell, or a Sutherland, ugh?"

"Let me out, an' I'll help ye, smith," shouted Jock through a round hole in the door of his dungeon.

Tho miller, who had hitherto been silent, now broke in with "Hoots toots, serjeant, this will never do, man. Waldie," turning to his friend the smith, "ye maunna crack your jokes here. The serjeant has the better o' ye baith in wit an' war; so dinna be swaggering. Jock, keep you quiet. The Guard was just doin' their duty when they took up your puir hungered horse. It was an act o' charity, man, to the puir dumb animal. Haud your tongue, Mark. Serjeant, ne'er mind him," he continued, on hearing the little captive tailor suddenly bursting into the following song.

THE CITY GUARD.

AIR—The Battle of Sheriffmuir.

SING glory to the gallant corps
Wha keep Auld Reekie's keys, man;
An' ope and steek the Black-hole door,
Just as their honours please, man:
Wha mak their faes their might to feel,
Wi' balls o' lead, or points o' steel,
Syne toom their maut aboon their meal;*
An' strunt an' stuff their beaks wi' snuff,
Then snort an' puff, sae grim an' gruff,
That every scoundrel flees, man.

O see them on their grand field days,
An' marchin' "raw by raw, man;"†
To shew how they had backed the *Greys*,
When in the *Forty-twa*, man;‡
How Gallia's lords an' Gallia's bands,
Were just like mice in Scotland's hands;
And how they conquered kings and lands;
Syne a' came here, to win a cheer
For their career, in ancient wear,
Afore they dozed awa, man.

Lang live the brave an' doughty band
To guard our ancient town, man;
An' lang may norland pith command
An' keep the causey crown, man;
Though mither wives, and laddie weans,
Attack them whiles wi' clods an' stanes,
And strive to break their Highland banes;
They tak the rout, when wi' a shout
The Guard rush out, an' wi a bout
Ding bauld rebellion down, man.

* When a man is tipsy, "his maut" is said to be "aboon his meal," maut or malt typifying liquor, meal, food. "Ta Guard," when a little elevated, were always most valiant.

† Ferguson.

‡ The Scots Greys and Black Watch gained honourable distinction by their joint exploits during the continental wars.

When the tailor began to chaunt this little ditty, which he did in a light merry strain, showing that he was not much depressed by the gloom of his dungeon, the dignified Highland commander of the Guard, and his no less dignified subordinates, seemed to wax exceeding wroth. But as the singer proceeded, and alluded to the ancient reputation of the corps to which most of the worthies had belonged, they cocked their ears, took out their snuff-horns, and commenced snuffing vigorously. After inhaling two enormous pinches, with a sound which rung through the apartment, the corporal handed his horn to the miller with a "Humph! but tat's a queer creature after a'." Deanhaugh, seeing the favourable turn matters had taken, backed the impression the tailor had made, by remarking, in a half-confidential whisper, to the corporal, whose vanity he cunningly flattered, by bestowing on him a higher title than he could yet claim, namely, that of serjeant,—

"'Od, serjeant, gin half-a-crown wad mak up the difference, I'm sure I wadna grudge it. It's a cauld night, an' ye wad be nane the waur o' a wee drap o' comfort. We met Jock by chance, puir fallow. He's an auld acquaintance, an' we were just tooming a stoup to auld langsyne, when his horse and cart were brought up here. I'll come caution he'll no offend again, and ye maun just let him off this time;" so saying, the worthy miller slipped a half-crown piece quietly into the hand of the new made serjeant. The dignified official did not openly look at the tempting coin, but he gave a sidelong glance at the miller, ordered his subordinates off on their rounds, and walking towards the door of the black hole, thus addressed its inmates,—

"Wad you'll promise to go awa quietly an' decently apoot your pusiness, lads, gin she'll let you out, an' no be rampauging about through the streets like plackguards, humph?

"I'll warrant ye you'll no catch me here the night again," replied Jock. "I'll be ower blythe to get my coals selt, and to be takin' the road hame to Gilmerton."

"And I'll scud hame as fast as my trotters will carry me to my ain bonnie wee wifie in the Water o' Leith, serjeant," exclaimed little Sprot.

"Well," said the serjeant, again half whispering the miller, "you'll see, if it had not been that another guard took up the beast, I would let her off willingly; but, you see, you would need to tooble the siller, to let them have a little trop too, you'll see, or ta might tell the magistrate, you'll know; and ta Bailies would swear we were all off our duty, you see, an' would maybe turn her nanesell about her pisiness; and you would need to gie her a sham bit of a knock down blow, too, afore you go awa, to mak an excuse, you see."

"Weel, weel," said the jolly miller, slipping the other half-crown into the open hand, ready to clutch it, "open your doors, an' let them

free. Come awa, Jock; lead your cart aff there, and gude night to ye. Mark, tak ye a haud o' Waldie's arm, an' be moving hameward. I'll follow ye as sune as I settle the reckoning wi' the serjeant." Accordingly, they all fairly set off on their different ways, though much against the wish of the smith, who was anxious to have a parting dram with Jock; and after the miller saw them all clear of the guardhouse door, he raised his immense fist into the air,—it descended,—but the yielding and accommodating serjeant fell to the earth ere the blow reached him, and lay on the floor as still as if he were stone dead. The miller of course walked away laughing, and the honest serjeant lay apparently senseless, until his comrades returned, when he reported that he had been knocked down by four men, who had "cleared ta house o' ta prisoners." In the mean time, the Water of Leith party made the best of their way home, which, owing to the slippery state of the roads, and the suppleness of the tailor's knee-joints, was no easy business. On reaching the outskirts of the town, they found the moon waiting to convey them home. The heavy mist or fog which had overhung the city did not extend further than the suburbs; and, by the time they had passed the Kirk-braehead, with its overhanging avenue of tall, old skeleton trees, and the no less dreary burying-ground, the moon, stars, and all the lights of heaven appeared streaming forth in dazzling brilliancy. The party reached home in safety, and the little tailor, now further elevated, and inspired by the beauty of the night, and his unexpected release from captivity, brought two or three of his worthy neighbours to their doors and windows, by chaunting aloud—

THERE'S nae chield can clip a coat
Wi' the clippy tailor;
There's nae chield can ware a groat
Wi' the coomy collier;
There's nae chield can fill a pock
Wi' the jolly miller;
There's nae key can pick a lock
Like the pickle siller.

An entire fortnight had passed away after this memorable day's excursion, and still no word had been heard of Widow Forrester. The miller had been several times since in the city, and on each of these occasions had made inquiries in every quarter where he thought there was the slightest chance of learning any thing about her. Coal Jock, according to promise, had taken up his station every night on the spot where the person he believed to be Widow Forrester had come to him to make her miserable purchase of coals, but she did not again appear.

The tailor, too, had set off twice or thrice on an exploratory expedition to the city, but his efforts had been equally fruitless; and the pre-assured air of success with which he passed the smithy in the mornings of his excursions, was not a little lowered when he had nothing in the evenings to answer the expecting "See gin night" of the quiet but waggish Vulcan. Matters continued in this state for a length of time, and there appeared no alternative to Deanhaugh but to wait till providence, or chance, should lead to the discovery of the widow, when one morning the village postman brought him a letter, bearing the London post-mark. The miller broke the seal, and read as follows:—

My Dear Deanhaugh,

The Government having ordered me back to Holland with answers to the express I brought home, I will not be able to keep my appointment with you, nor to visit my native village, the Water of Leith, on the present occasion. I trust, however, that you have been successful in the object of your search, and that you have discovered Widow Forrester and her daughter; if so, convey to them my warm love, and inform the widow, that her husband's foster-brother, who went to sea a very naughty boy, and who, I daresay, has been considered long dead, is still alive, has realized a competency, and means to return shortly to employ that wealth in raising the widow and daughter of his foster-brother to a higher sphere of life than that in which they have hitherto moved. Tell her to watch attentively the state of her daughter's affections, and to beware that the young lady form no connection with a lover in the lower ranks of life. She will have a considerable fortune, and I would have her to make a good match. I shall be enabled to return in a month or two at farthest, when I shall be happy to repay you for any kindness you may show the widow and her daughter. Meantime I enclose you for their behoof an order on the British Linen Company for twenty guineas. And remain, &c.

"Aye," exclaimed the honest miller, folding up the letter, "wha could hae thought that the wee, spitfire flibbertigibbet that I mind o' pu'in' out o' the water and savin' frae drowning, and wham every body thought was either hanged or drowned lang ago, sould hae come back a wealthy auld chap like you. Aweel, I maun just keep on the look-out for the widow. Let me see, 'od, I'll send a letter to the Edinburgh Post-Office, addressed to the Widow of the late John Forrester, millwright, Water of Leith. It will lie in the window, an' may chance to catch Mrs Forrester's ee, or that o' somebody wha kens her; we maunna leave a stane unturned to try and find her out."

CHAPTER III.

What's lent to the orphan heaven pays back tenfold ;—
Far better gain hearts than keep red rusty gold :
And when your soul wings its way, trembling in fear,
How cheering to meet them ye sheltered while here.
Proverb.

DO not know, dear reader, whether you have ever experienced the delightful emotion felt by those who have been instrumental in rescuing virtuous worth from the iron grasp of poverty. If you have not, let me counsel you instantly to yield to the genial impulses of your nature, and put yourself in the way of enjoying this luxury. Objects, ay, and deserving objects, heaven knows, are always to be found in abundance, on which to exercise your benevolence. The inmates of yon wretched hovel on the bleak and lonely moor, contented though they may appear, are sadly scant of food and raiment, wherewith to encounter the inclemency of winter. Thousands are huddled together in the narrow lanes and alleys of large towns, *grawling* for food among the refuse of your kitchens, and vainly attempting to hide their nakedness with miserable patches of fluttering and ragged garments. Select, then, good reader, from among these victims of poverty those you may think most needy and deserving. They surely are not all dissipated and idle. See these children of want, mark how they are endeavouring, by a thousand little wiles, to arrest your attention, to win your kind look, to awaken your sympathy. Repel them not by your coldness, then, nor flee them as if they had nothing in common with yourself; as if they were the doomed children of pestilence. Remember they are human beings, with human affections, and human failings it may be, but also human feelings. They are, like yourself, living and breathing transcripts of the divinity. If, then, surrounded by want and misery as they are, they be apt to forget the dignity of their nature, is it not your duty to en-

deavour to awaken them by gentle and benevolent ministrations to a consciousness of their error? It is! I do not mean by homilies and lectures, all very good in their season, but by such temporal aid as shall, by rescuing them from a demoralizing poverty, enable them to see and be ashamed of the degradation to which want and misery had exposed them.

I have elsewhere stated, that I had been instrumental in some degree in relieving the wants of Widow Forrester, at a time when she was in very reduced circumstances, and when, but for that assistance, she would, in all human probability, have sunk under the combined pressure of disease and poverty. I have also stated elsewhere, that her daughter had been, through the influence of my friend Mr Hepburn, admitted into the Trades' Maiden Hospital, where she was educated. This brief recapitulation I have thought necessary, as I propose now tracing the history of that daughter from the time of her admission into the hospital, until the period at which our narrative commences.

Martha Forrester, the widow's daughter, was twelve years of age when she was first admitted into the excellent institution above named, and at that time, no one who was at all acquainted with her history, could look on her without taking an interest in her. Her countenance, as I have elsewhere said, was very beautiful. Her figure was elegant, though small and fragile; and her low, soft voice was the sweetest toned I ever heard. All her movements, too, were singularly graceful, her manners gentle, and every thing she said and did bespoke an amiable nature, associated with no ordinary degree of shrewdness and good sense. She had never been in a school-room until she became an inmate of the Trades' Maiden Hospital. But her education at home had been of a superior description, and for this she was indebted to her exemplary mother, who, while she taught her her letters, did not neglect to imbue her mind with the spirit of a refined and elevating morality. By constantly holding up to her contemplation the beauties of virtue, she quickened her perceptions of the deformities of vice.

Little Martha soon became a great favourite in the hospital, gaining the love of both her companions and teachers, including that of Mrs Jolly, the exemplary and kind-hearted mistress of the institution; in which that good lady herself had been brought up, and which she regarded as the greatest, the best, and the most beneficent the world had ever seen. With the Trades' Maiden Hospital was the whole heart and soul of this worthy person bound up. She loved to hear it talked of, to see it written about, and she did her best to render it worthy of being both.

Mrs Jolly might, indeed, be said to be a despotic sovereign, but she ruled her little kingdom with a golden sceptre of love, not with a rod of iron. To her, her little subjects confided all their little secrets; to her they applied for redress of all their grievances; and to her were all their little differences referred. To win her approbation was a great object of ambition with the juvenile community over which she presided, no member of which ever considered her happiness complete without having gained her especial favour. She loved them all, indeed, but there were two or three who might be called her maids of honour, who were admitted to a fuller confidence than the others. These especial favourites were brought out on all great occasions, and were liberally praised by their kind and benevolent mistress. When the Governors—the Town Council—made their grand annual visit, the stately cocked-hatted dignitaries were each and all presented with some little specimen of embroidery or needle-work, executed by these little artists in the queen's own boudoir. On these occasions the Lord Provost would probably be presented with a watch ribbon, having the city arms beautifully worked on it, and some little blushing maiden would be pointed out as the artist. Then would the gracious and smiling Chief Magistrate condescend to pat her little head, and gently inclining his magnificently powdered head, imprint a kiss on her little glowing cheek. Then would the little favoured maiden steal blushingly away, ashamed of the distinction conferred on her, and envied by her companions.

Then was there the examination of the pupils by their worthy patrons, the said Town Council, who were the ostensible judges and prize givers, and who, while the French and Italian exercises were going on, sat gravely, holding books before them, of which they did not understand one word. When discharging this part of their public duty, however, they always took good care to have the assistance of the city clergymen, whom they narrowly watched, turning over leaf after leaf as they saw them do, and finally awarding the prizes to the successful competitors with much apparent discrimination, and the most imperturbable gravity. The prize winners on all these occasions were invariably Mrs Jolly's especial favourites; and it could not be otherwise, as that good lady always selected the most industrious and the most deserving in the establishment as objects of her especial patronage.

Then there were the Sunday processions to the Greyfriars Church, the comfortable looking matron always heading the cavalcade, and selecting for her companion some one of the girls who had distinguished herself by some meritorious performance during the week. Then that little companion walked, linked in the arm of the good lady, who, after depositing her offering in the plate, was always honoured with a shake

of the Elder's hand who stood on duty, an honour which was also bestowed on the little blushing maiden who leant on her arm; and who also enjoyed the enviable privilege of depositing her mite, the said mite having been furnished her for such display by her kind mistress. Then did the little chosen one accompany her patroness into the front pew of the gallery, where she enjoyed the triumph of being seen from all quarters of the church, and of having her little straw bonnet, her little white frill, her little black curls, and her little blushing face, admired by the congregation around her. Often did the little favourite attract the eye of the officiating clergyman, who would pause in the midst of his prayer, and gazing on her little happy face, would draw thence an inspiration, which enabled him to plead with increased fervour on behalf of the widow and the fatherless.

The Trades' Maiden Hospital then stood where it still stands, in one of the quietest and most secluded streets of Edinburgh. The building is a plain square structure, having nothing striking or attractive in its external appearance. A grass-plot intervenes between the street and the house, which is altogether rather heavy and dull-looking. The interior is mainly divided into long, old-fashioned, low-roofed wards; and a very pleasant sight it is to see their extreme cleanliness; their well scrubbed floors, their pure white walls, and their little tidy beds, tucked up so neatly, everything bespeaking the utmost attention to the comforts of the little inmates, and presenting a spectacle exceedingly gratifying to the philanthropic mind.

Of all the favourite protogées good Mrs Jolly ever had, none stood higher in her good graces than Martha Forrester, and well did the little maiden deserve the preference, so beautiful was she, so kind, so diligent, so patient, so all-enduring, that it was impossible to do otherwise than love her. How, then, could good, kind, Mrs Jolly ever endure her absence? How could she for an instant look on little Martha with indifference? and how was it possible that she could be anything else than what she was, namely, secretary of state and prime minister to the queenly Mrs Jolly? Honest, worthy soul, I recollect well when I called on her, as I frequently did, I always found little Martha busily engaged, either in adding up Mrs Jolly's cash-book, jotting down her daily expenditure, preparing the toast for her tea, or sewing away at a new collar, or a pair of sleeve-ruffles, for her mistress. Martha, in short, was every thing to Mrs Jolly, and Mrs Jolly was every thing to Martha.

If I had happened to call of an evening after Martha had gone to bed, good, kind Mrs Jolly leading the way on tiptoe, would conduct me into her little dormitory, and turning down the coverlet of the bed in which the child lay, with her arms around the neck of another not

less lovely in sleep than herself, would she impress a motherly kiss on the cheek of her little favourite; then would she gently shed the long curling locks of raven hair that shrouded her blooming countenance, and lifting up the little hand that lay half in shadow round the neck of the other youthful sleeper, would she press that hand to her lips. Following her example, I would do the same, and then, God help me, as I found the blood rushing through my veins, I would have half thought myself a father. Then did I bless the founders of such an institution. Then, also, would I read and commit to memory the names of the various donors, which were inscribed, in old fashioned letters of gold, on black antique tablets placed round the large hall in which the inmates assembled for prayer; and then would I envy those beneficent donors a fame so safely enshrined in the hearts and the memories of the widow and the orphan.

Martha Forrester was seventeen years of age when she left the Trades' Maiden Hospital, and her loss was severely felt by Mrs Jolly. Her agreeable manners, her obliging disposition, and her manifold accomplishments had completely won the affections of the good old lady, who set earnestly about procuring a suitable situation for her, and it was not long before one presented itself. A young lady was wanted to officiate as a sort of joint governess and ladies' maid, in a family with which Mrs Jolly had some slight acquaintance; and, in consequence of her recommendation, Martha was at once appointed to the situation.

The head of the family into which Martha was now admitted was a Mr John Cauldwell, a barrister or advocate, of some note and standing. This gentleman was the younger of two brothers of an ancient Scottish family, of considerable landed property, which, according to Scottish law, the elder brother inherited to the exclusion of the younger brother, who, as in all such cases, was left to shift for himself. Mr Cauldwell had always been a pains-taking, plodding, industrious man, and had gradually and quietly slipped into a very extensive and respectable business. He was a man of correct habits, methodical in all his ways; cool, collected, and of equable temper—hardly anything, indeed, could ruffle or discompose him—and his conversation was at once plausible and insipid. His business-papers were all well written, exhibiting, when necessary, careful calculation and patient research; his speeches were long-winded, prosing orations, that rumbled along like a heavy coach on a level road,—his progress was slow, but sure and equal, there being neither a rise nor a fall from beginning to end. Having no feeling himself, he never addressed himself to the feelings of his auditors; but, then, he professed to be a man of mature judgment, of incorruptible integrity, and immense sagacity. He talked as slowly and guardedly as if every word he uttered was destined to be

printed in letters of gold. His dress corresponded with the precision and staid gravity of his character; and no member of the bar or bench could boast either wig or gown comparable to those of advocate Cauldwell. He pled always with the forefinger of his right hand extended, and took care that not a single word of what he said should be lost;—he practised, in fact, without knowing it, the art of mesmerizing—his orations having the quality of putting all his auditors to sleep.

Mr Cauldwell's professional and forensic peculiarities, his stiffness and dignity, he carried into the domestic circle, into the bosom of his family. His children he seldom spoke to; and when he did condescend to notice them, it was always with a patronising air, and in a cold and formal manner, as if he either were without, or despised, the feelings of a parent. With all this, however, he took care that his children should be fully instructed in all the fashionable accomplishments of the day; their expectations from his brother, who was a bachelor, and, as already said, possessed of considerable landed property, were very large. Thus, although Mr Cauldwell seldom gave formal parties, the house was constantly thronged with visitors, or, more properly speaking, callers; and it was the peculiar anxiety of that gentleman that these callers should either be his clients, or persons who were likely, by their conversation, to elevate and refine the manners and tastes of his family.

It has been remarked, that a general resemblance may often be traced between husband and wife. This remark, however, did not hold good in the case of Mr and Mrs Cauldwell,—the latter being as different from the former as day from night. The lady was all bustle and activity, all fire and fury. No servant could live with her any time, and the consequence was, that she had always the greatest difficulty in finding them,—the whole town, nay, the whole county too, being often ransacked for them in vain. A common expedient of this lady's was to seduce the servants of her acquaintances from their allegiance; and, when successful, she would hug herself in the pleasing hope that at last she had got a maid to her mind, which meant, one whom no scrubbing, washing, sweeping, *redding up*, or *flyting*, could ever tire. Vain hope! Ere one little week had passed—this paragon of perfection was found to be no better than her predecessors,—she was discovered, in short, to be a dirty drab, who never could have been tolerated so long where she had been, had her former mistress paid any attention to her household affairs: in one little week, the lynx-eyed, never-enough-doing, ever-working, restless, fat, little Mrs Cauldwell had found her out—had found that she would never answer.

One servant, however, she had, whom no rough usage could force from her allegiance. This person was an old, withered, skin-dried, little woman, called Maillie, a veteran retainer of the family, who had

nursed Mrs Cauldwell, and had thus been of the household for two generations. This ancient dependent was the prop and stay of her mistress in all her difficulties, and in the intervals between the dismissal of one class of servants and the appointment of their successors, the services of old Maillie were always called into requisition, and were put forth in full and active operation.

Although my readers are now, I presume, pretty well acquainted with Mrs Cauldwell's character, a few points still remain to be noticed. That good lady was always the first person in the house up in the morning, and the last who retired to bed at night; she invariably slept with the key of the front door beneath her pillow, and carefully examined the dust pan, previous to its being consigned to the cart in the morning, lest a silver spoon or any other valuable article should have found its way there. If she was confined for half a day to bed, the whole house was thrown into a state of confusion, the dear delicate children Misses Jane and Maria and little Master John cruelly neglected, insulted, and ill-treated—so she alleged. Every thing, in fact, went wrong, unless she was in the way to keep every thing right. There was always some conspiracy, as she believed, on foot against her; —a something of which she had just caught an inkling. In short, if ever there was an active, hard-working, deserving, tormented, tortured, toiled-to-death little woman, that little woman was Mrs Cauldwell.

Is it not strange, good reader, that the daughters of hard-working, industrious, never enough doing mothers are generally, if not invariably, slatterns; example, apparently, failing in such cases to produce its legitimate effects?

The Misses Jane and Maria Cauldwell were as unlike their mother in person as possible, being tall and spare, while she was short and squab. They were always complaining, too, never, poor dear darlings, being free from some ailment or other. Fragile and colourless—pulmonary consumption was hinted at as the too probable cause. They were not permitted to touch anything that could soil those delicate fingers which had never been formed to handle anything heavier than a drawing pencil; and Miss Maria, who was thought to have a genius for music, spent almost all her time at her favourite instrument, the spinnet.

Yet, delicate and fragile, and innocent-looking as these young ladies were, was it not strange that they should have run the gauntlet of nearly all the schools in town, none caring to retain them? That teacher after teacher should have been waited on by their bland father, and offered double fees to receive them into their establishments; that teacher after teacher had refused to have anything to do with them on any terms; that one honest, plain-speaking man, when applied to, vowed that he would rather "nap stanes on the hie road than let sic

evil spirits enter his school-room." Was it not strange that the worthy and wealthy Mr Cauldwell, from the difficulty of getting his daughters educated out of doors, should have been driven to the expedient of getting a person into the house to teach them; and was it not most unfortunate for poor Martha Forrester that she should have been the person chosen for that purpose? But so it was. Mr Cauldwell meeting Mrs Jolly on the street one day accidentally, applied to her for such a person as he wanted, when the good, kind soul named Martha Forrester, who was immediately engaged.

Poor Martha was at first delighted with the new sphere of life into which she was introduced. The bland and courteous Mr Cauldwell inquired anxiously after her health every day at table, asked about her mother, and paid her, in every way, more than ordinary attention, while his lady overwhelmed her with kindness, and affected a degree of deference to her opinion, which was still more gratifying to the poor unfortunate girl. It was, "Martha, how do you like Jane's dress, do you think it becoming?" "Is not that a sweet little piece of sewing work she brought home from her last school?" and "Does not that wonderful creature Maria make that spinnet absolutely speak, and yet the little minx will not condescend to learn a note of music, she has it all by intuition, all, dear creature. By the bye, Martha, you were to have gone to see your mother to-night; but the air is raw, and you might catch cold, so you had better stay at home, and amuse yourself with Maria and Jane. Give them a tune on the spinnet, or a lesson in embroidery: I shall be back presently." And away would the little busy woman skip, screaming to the servants at the top of her voice, or stealing along like a cat, that she might catch them in some forbidden act.

These interesting young ladies, Maria and Jane Cauldwell, were not altogether such prodigies of learning and genius as their mother imagined. Their virtues and their vices, their attractions and acquirements, were all of a minor and mediocre description. But the great defect of their character was a total want of action. They were dawdling and listless, and seemed to have no higher enjoyment than lolling on a sofa, with a sentimental novel in their hands, or sleepily thrumming "Rouseau's Dream" on their squeaking spinnet. Thus did the lives of these young ladies pass away, useless to themselves and to every one around them. Unable to apply themselves to any rational employment, frivolous, capricious, and self-willed, they soon put poor Martha's endurance to the severest trials. But she not only bore all meekly and resolutely, but made the most unceasing efforts to improve her pupils; although grieved to find, that notwithstanding all she could do, they made but little progress under her training.

There were those, however, who thought otherwise. The Misses Cauldwell, in fact, in a short time, began to be looked up to as prodigies of learning and genius, a distinction at which they had long aimed, but with little success. Now, however, they rapidly overtopped all the young ladies in the circle of their acquaintance. The trees in their drawings, which had formerly a strong resemblance to brooms, were now clothed with rich and broad foliage, and really looked like what they were intended for; so like, that every body who saw them, were astonished at the rapid progress of the Misses Cauldwell under their new governess.

The great notoriety which her pupils thus achieved, instead of improving Martha's condition, rendered it still more irksome and unendurable, for on her devolved all the toil of sustaining this notoriety. Specimens of the needlework and drawings, executed by the wonderful Misses, were in great demand. Some of their work, indeed, was sent all the way to London, and was said to have created quite a sensation there amongst those skilled in such matters. The Misses Cauldwells' specimens, in fact, carried away the palm at all public displays, although it soon began to be whispered that they were the work, not of the young ladies, but of their governess. And in truth it was so. These much admired and much praised specimens of sewing were the work of poor Martha Forrester. Night after night, day after day, did that good, kind, patient girl toil on in her thankless, cheerless round of labour, curtailing the hours of sleep, and abjuring every recreation, to enable her young ladies to maintain appearances. No murmur of complaint ever escaped her. No discontented expression ever fell from her lips. Her bright eyes were, indeed, sometimes dimmed with working during the long night, and perchance a stray and silent tear would occasionally steal adown her pale cheek. But she thought on her dear mother, and the delight she felt in being able to contribute to her comfort, cheered her through all her difficulties, and enabled her at once to assume her brightest look when any one came near. She thus always appeared the same smiling, kind, and happy creature; and they must have had cold hearts, indeed, and blunted perceptions, who could look on her with indifference.

The accomplished young ladies, to whom Martha's industry and talents were of such essential service, would, one should think, have shewn her all the kindness in their power in return for such services. But this was by no means the case. The Misses Cauldwell, instead of being satisfied with her exertions, only increased their demands on her patience and skill. It mattered not to them how, or when, Martha executed these beautiful specimens of sewing work, so they were done, and they got the credit of doing them. Any modicum of praise that

fell to Martha's share, was bestowed by the former companions of the Cauldwells, who knew them to be incapable of executing work so delicate and beautiful. By others the governess was sometimes, indeed, talked of in Mr Cauldwell's house. And little Mrs Cauldwell, by way of carrying conviction to some of her neighbour gossips of the aristocratic quality of her family, used frequently, in conversation, the term "our governess," in a very significant manner. But it was never hinted that that governess had any hand in executing any of these choice pieces of work that every body admired; and, while poor Martha toiled and struggled and taxed her energies to the utmost to sustain the reputation of her young ladies, her services were neither acknowledged nor requited.

When Martha had been nearly a year in her situation, Mrs Cauldwell anxious, like all mothers, to shew her daughters off to the best advantage, resolved on gathering together a few of their young friends, and holding a grand festival or sort of tea drinking and dancing party at her house in Ramsay Gardens. This turn out was to be a light, airy concern, calculated to suit the tastes of the young people, and, with the exception of a few lawyers' ladies, who were invited to tea, to give a sort of matronly countenance to the affair, there were no married or elderly persons to be admitted. It was to be quite a juvenile fête. Accordingly, a number of the neatest, smartest dressed, junior members of the legal profession, such as Advocates' clerks, and regularly indentured apprentices to Writers to the Signet, were selected and invited to be present on this momentous occasion;—there were also a few of the most fashionable among the sons of the Lawnmarket merchants; one or two young gentlemen from the country, whose fathers were clients of Mr Cauldwell, were also invited; and altogether the company was very select, and very well chosen. Mr John Cauldwell, too, invited a few intimate chums, a sort of nondescripts, of whom nobody knew any thing but himself. They were, however, fashionable young men, and every one was delighted with their appearance.

Young ladies there were in abundance, selected from the same ranks in life, but none to compare with the beautiful and accomplished Misses Jane and Maria, at least so thought these two fair maidens themselves, and so, too, thought their admiring parents, and so, too, affected to think certain parties present on the occasion. Besides their beauty and accomplishments, these two interesting young ladies were said to be dead bargains in a pecuniary point of view. Their father had an excellent business, their uncle was a rich old bachelor, and their brother a scapegrace, to whom the former, it was thought, would not leave a shilling, but would bequeath the bulk of his fortune to his two dear nieces. Thus were these young ladies on this occasion the leading

THE CAULDWELL BALL

stars of the evening, from whom all the lesser stars around them were to borrow light; the luminaries on which the eyes and the hopes of the most ambitious of the young lawyers were fixed. Miss Leech might be pretty, Miss Brownlees engaging, and some of the other young ladies sufficiently attractive, but none of them could expect more than a momentary glance from eyes rivetted on the charms of Jane and Maria Cauldwell. After tea, the honours of which had been gracefully performed by Miss Jane, amidst much laughing, and tittering, and gossipping, the tea table was wheeled aside into a corner of the apartment, when the simpering Miss Maria was led by a smart sprig of the law to her favourite instrument the spinnet, on which she played a fashionable air, previous to the commencement of the dancing. The performance was of course rapturously applauded, and although the young lady did lay on rather heavily now and then, and lost a bar or two occasionally, which she made up at another time, such irregularities were looked upon as the eccentricities of genius, which could not be indulged in but by one who had complete command of the instrument. After this preliminary flourish, Miss Maria declared herself ready to play to the dancers. Gladly taking the hint, the young men selected and led out their partners, and in a moment after the dancing began, "they reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleekit," Miss Maria playing on without weariness, and without intermission. Oranges and sweetmeats were handed round by smart young men to smart young ladies, accompanied by looks, and sighs, and words of tender import; and when the dancing stopped, or Miss Maria paused for an instant in her playing, half finished protestations, half made appointments, and half uttered exclamations might be heard, betraying the conversation that had been passing under cover of the din of shuffling feet and squeaking music.

During one of these temporary lulls or pauses in the dance, it suddenly occurred to a certain dapper young gentleman who was suspected of entertaining a very tender, though secret, attachment to Miss Maria, that his beloved, while contributing so largely to the entertainment of others, had been herself entirely neglected, she having had no opportunity of displaying her elegant figure or graceful dancing. Resolved that this injustice should be forthwith repaired, the young gentleman approached Miss Maria, and addressing her in an audible whisper, said—

"How few, my dear Miss Maria, how few can boast of your accomplishments! How long will such examples as your excellent parents have presented in the education of their daughters be disregarded by their neighbours? You are this very night, my dear Maria, a martyr to this negligence, since, had any of the young ladies here been taught

music, they might, though but sorry substitutes, have relieved you from the spinnet, when I might have had the honour of dancing with you."

"I am much obliged by your attention, sir," replied Miss Maria, "but I don't feel in the least fatigued. I am passionately fond of music, and delight in making you all happy. Nay, to tell you the truth, I would rather have the companionship of my little spinnet here," giving the instrument a gentle tap, and looking up in the face of her admirer with an arch and half encouraging smile, "than that of the smartest young beau amongst you."

Now, it happened that the busy, active, watchful Mrs Cauldwell, who was, as usual, looking sharply after every thing, had come to the side of the room where her daughter was, at the very time when the conversation above recorded was being carried on. She was struck with the view of her beloved daughter's martyrdom, as presented to her by the lover of the latter, and instantly hurried down to the kitchen where Martha and old Maillie were busily engaged preparing supper, when, having surveyed their preparations with an approving glance, she thus addressed the former:—

"Now, Martha, my dear, Maillie and I will manage the remainder of the work, and as you have not been in the ball-room since you assisted in decorating it so prettily, will you just put yourself a little in order, and take Maria's place at the spinnet. She, having been playing incessantly for some hours past, the dear girl must now be much fatigued, and our little darling Jane, you know, my dear Martha, has no ear for music, so that there is no one but you in the house who can relieve the musician from her labours."

Martha expressed her readiness to comply with Mrs Cauldwell's request, that lady's requests always sounding very like commands. On this occasion, however, Martha's compliance was, perhaps, the more ready, that it was the first opportunity she had ever had of being present at a ball. Having retired to change her dress, she returned in a few minutes neatly and simply attired, old Maillie declaring, that "she looked as weel as the best lady among them."

Mrs Cauldwell had little or no taste for or knowledge of music, and, like many other mothers, thought her daughter's style of playing infinitely superior to that of her preceptor's. She anticipated, too, that the plainly-dressed Martha would form a capital foil to the splendidly attired Miss Maria, and this, in fact, was partly her reason for pressing Martha to place herself at the spinnet. The good lady never for a moment imagined that the effect would have been directly the reverse. Little did she dream, good woman, that Martha's more elegant figure, and superior acquirements, were calculated to throw her beloved daugh-

ter entirely into shade. Accordingly, Miss Martha Forrester was unhesitatingly introduced by Mrs Cauldwell into the drawing-room, and announced as the governess of the family, who had come to assist Miss Maria in supplying music for the company.

The cold reception which generally marks the introduction of governesses into family parties is well known. The miserable mockery of equality with which they are ostensibly treated is almost more offensive, more humiliating, than would be the most marked display of the superiority it is meant to conceal. Martha, however, was received on the present occasion in a very different manner. The moment she entered the ball-room, it was evident she had made an impression which her mistress had by no means anticipated. Beauty, simple, unadorned beauty, has at all times a powerful influence over the sympathies of mankind, and thus it was that every eye was quickly bent with admiration on bashful, blushing Martha Forrester.

Martha's countenance was a finely formed oval. Her brow was high rather than broad, her eyes of a dark hazel, approaching to black, and over-arched by two delicately pencilled jet black eye-brows. Her mouth was small, and beautifully chiselled, and her lips were of the purest vermeil. Her nose inclined rather to the Roman than Grecian. Her hair hung in long black ringlets around her face and neck, both of which were crimsoned by the feeling of bashfulness with which she had been nearly overwhelmed when she entered the room. Presently the ruddy tinge passed away, leaving behind a pure and delicate white, not to be equalled by, nor compared to, any other hue in nature. A simple blue ribbon bound her hair behind, and her white muslin dress was confined round her waist by a band of the same colour. Simple as were these adornments, Martha's appearance was so dignified, chaste, and beautiful, that the haughtiest belles in Mrs Cauldwell's ball-room, notwithstanding their rich jewels and sparkling brilliants, faded into nothing, the moment Martha Forrester entered the apartment.

It was soon evident, that a feeling of unmingled admiration of Martha's charms prevailed amongst the young men of the party, and, with the exception of Miss Maria, who crimsoned, and exclaimed, "La, Ma, what was the use of this?" all the ladies also gave Martha a warm and cordial reception.

Poor Martha felt much fluttered and excited. This, as already said, was the first time she had ever been present at so large and fashionable a party. Anxious, however, to escape the universal gaze that was fixed on her, she hurried to the spinnet, and ran over some notes, as Miss Maria thought, in a rather ostentatious way, while waiting till partners had been chosen, and the parties arranged for the next dance. Miss Maria

was, of course, now a leading dancer, and, in the estimation of her delighted little mamma, the most elegant in the room. Now she skipped from side to side, and now she pirouetted, holding out the skirts of her dress with the air of an opera dancer, her mamma gazing on her in raptures, and, by sundry winks and nods, inviting others to admire her dear Maria, in whom all perfection centred.

The company had now, however, formed a very different estimate of the young lady's musical attainments from what they formerly entertained. The spinnet, as was quickly perceived, had got into very superior hands, and the result was soon perceptible in the delightful music it was made to discourse. The dancing now went on with increased spirit, the floor being seldom unoccupied for a moment, the young gentlemen declaring they could not sit still with such stirring music ringing in their ears, and the young ladies dancing furiously, as if to testify how delighted they were to see Miss Maria so completely stripped of her laurels. Occasional whispers, too, might be heard,— "Little wonder than Maria Cauldwell can play so well. Had I had such a teacher, I think I could have made that spinnet speak."

Such remarks as these, added to the circumstances in which Martha was placed, contributed to render her an object of peculiar interest. Some of the smartest and gayest of the young bucks present leant over her chair, and whispered such tender things into her ear as made the blood mount to her forehead, and threw her now and then for an instant off the time. The young ladies, too, gathered in groups around her, and gazed with admiration on the movements of her nimble and taper fingers, as they flew over the keys of the instrument, bringing out the most delightful sounds.

All this had been noted with feelings of angry jealousy by Miss Maria, who resolved to make a desperate effort to regain her lost position, and to re-establish herself in the good graces of at least the male portion of the company. Accordingly, taking advantage of a temporary cessation in the dancing, she gave Martha to understand that she would resume her place at the spinnet. Martha instantly arose, and resigned her seat to her young mistress, when the gentleman who had just danced with the latter, and who had conducted her to the spinnet, politely requested the honour of Martha's partnership for the next dance. Too mild and gentle to refuse, Martha was, in another minute, threading the mazes of a reel to Miss Maria's music.

The company might, perhaps, have been sufficiently satisfied with the performance of the latter had they not heard the delightful playing of Martha; but, as it was, the inferiority of Miss Maria's execution became painfully evident. Those sly foxes who get up public meetings, so plentifully now-a-days, begin with their small-gun speakers

first, reserving their heavy cannon for the conclusion. They know well that a speaker of small calibre has no chance after a full-mouthed orator. Of this truth, however, Miss Maria seemed to be ignorant, or, perhaps, her self-conceit and jealousy got the better of her judgment. Had it not been so, she certainly never would have touched the instrument in the presence of strangers after Martha Forrester; she seemed, however, to have some doubts of the superiority of her performance, for she played apparently with the desperate resolution of a gamester who has just periled his last stake.

Now, had Miss Maria abstained from touching the spinnet after Martha, her performance would have escaped with little notice; but, as she had not chosen to do so, the contrast was so very striking between the coarse, hard, unblendable notes of the former, and the sweet, clear, liquid tones of the latter, that many shrugged their shoulders, while some were even rude enough to stop their ears with their fingers.

It was thus, that thump and rattle away at the spinnet as Miss Maria might, the dancing flagged sadly, while the time she kept was so irregular, that the dancers were quickly thrown into the utmost confusion; and although the musician continued to thump away, resolved to die rather than give in, the floor was shortly left entirely empty, the company having seated themselves around the room heartily sick of the discordant music. At this appalling crisis, one of the very young sparks, who had made himself remarkable throughout the evening by his unwearied assiduities, volunteered a song, on condition that Martha would accompany him on the spinnet. He had, he said, brought the music with him; the said music being the production of a young friend, a man of great genius, and as Miss Forrester must be able to read at sight, and would, he was sure, give the accompaniments every justice, the song must delight the company. Martha, with great readiness, undertook the task, altogether unaware of the jealousy she was exciting in the breast of Miss Maria Cauldwell; and the following song was sung with considerable taste and feeling.

HEIGH! HO!

Tell me, Maiden, tell me truly,
Hast thou lost thy heart or no?
In the charming month of July
Hearts will go a-wandering so;
Is it so,
Ay or no?
Hearts will go—with a—heigh! ho!

Dew bespangles mead and mountain,
Sunbeams kiss, and flowerets blow ;
By the shady fell and fountain
Lovers will a-wooing go ;
Is it so,
Ay or no ?
Hearts will go—with a—heigh ! ho !

Ope thine eyes, and spare thy roses,
Thus outblushing Nature so ;
Love is still, and ne'er discloses
What the July gloamings know ;
Is it so,
Ay or no ?
Hearts will go—with a—heigh ! ho !

On concluding the song, the singer, who was now one of the lions of the party, after hemming and coughing, looked affectedly round him, and with an air of conscious importance said—

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, it is my prerogative to call for a song, and I would make the demand on our accomplished musician here, entreating her to accompany herself on the spinnet."

Martha, who knew little of the world, and nothing of hypocrisy, blushed deeply, and faulteringly replied, that she had not been in the habit of singing before company, and that she felt she could not do justice to her homely songs before so many ; neither were they, she feared, sufficiently polished for so refined and critical an audience.

"My dear Miss," replied the gentleman, "songs cannot be couched in too homely language, if they are meant to appeal to the heart and the affections. The simpler they are in expression, the more forcible are they, and if humorous descriptions of scenes in humble life, what language is so well adapted for such description as our good old Saxon vernacular ?

The remarks of the speaker were cordially approved of by all ; and thus urged and thus entreated, Martha sung as follows :—

MY WILLIE AN' ME.

My minny is pawky, my minny is slee,
She keeps me aye close 'neath the kep o' her ee ;
She bids me gae nurse my young billie awee,
But wots nae how sleely my Willie woos me.

What ails my auld minny at Willie an' me?
How e'er can my minny wyte Willie an' me?
When nought but the wean an' the wee butterflee
Can see the stoun kiss o' my Willie an' me.

My grandfather suns himsell on the door-stane,
And dreams o' my grandmother lang dead an' gane;
He gazes on heaven wi' his lustreless ee,—
They surely ance loved like my Willie an' me.

I ken Willie's true, and I ken he's my ain,
He courts nae for gear, an' he comes nae for gain;
He leaves a' his flocks far outower on yon lea,
What true heart wad sinder my Willie an' me?

Then what ails my minny at Willie an' me?
She shouldna be sair on my Willie an' me;
Her black ribboned snood brings the tear to my ee,
But weel my dear father lo'ed Willie an' me.

This song was so beautifully sung, the simple feeling embodied in the words so well expressed, and the clear rich tones of the singer's voice were so touching, that all present were deeply affected. The ladies were delighted, the gentlemen in raptures. Cheers, and shouts, and clapping of hands, rewarded the singer, and intimated the pleasure she had afforded. These signs of satisfaction were followed by a simultaneous call on Martha for another song, and Martha had no alternative but to comply. So gratified was she, poor girl, by the flattering approbation of those around her, by the kindness and condescension they had shewn her, and to which she had been so long unaccustomed, that her gratitude knew no bounds, and she again, at their request, raised her voice in song.

AIR—Muckle thinks my love o' my beauty.

AULD Johnnie comes ower and he cracks wi' my mither,
The auld warld carle is pawky an' slee;
Lang Sandy gangs out an' gets fou wi' my brither,
And bribes the poor coof to be blackfoot to me.
But my manly Jamie, wi' forehead sae hie,
Has a lowe in his cheek, an' a star in his ee;
I wotna gin Jamie e'er cracks o' puir Phemie,
But weel do I wot a' his thoughts are wi' me.

I wotna how worth is sae bashfu' and backward,
I wotna how fools are sae forward an' free;
I wotna how Jamie's sae blate and sae awkward,
I wotna how my wee heart wanders ajee.
But ah! there's a flame that the warld canna see,
In the slee keekin' glance o' a love-lighted ee;
An' Jamie's aye keekin', while others are speakin',
An' I wad keek too, but he's keekin' on me.

This song was equally well received with the former. Martha was again overwhelmed with applause. Alas, poor girl, she knew little of the turnings and windings of the human heart, and therefore little dreamt that, while she had been exerting herself, and that beyond her strength, to entertain the guests of her employer, she had been exciting jealousy, wrath, and all uncharitableness against herself among her employer's family. She never dreamt, poor girl, that she had on this night converted her professed friends and patrons into her bitterest enemies;—that her mistress, who had brought her into the ball-room for the purpose of assisting her daughter, now construed all her attempts to entertain her guests, into base and ungrateful efforts to eclipse the all-accomplished Maria;—that, in her own mind, the little fat mistress of the house had set Martha down as a vain, silly creature, who was endeavouring, and time only could tell with what success, to seduce from his allegiance the young gentleman, whom she had determined to secure, if possible, for a son-in-law;—that, in short, it was determined on, on this night, that she should be discharged at the ensuing term; and in a few days thereafter, Martha was told to look out for another place, Mrs Cauldwell having no further occasion for her services.

It may be thought, seeing the general admiration which Martha's talents had excited at Mrs Cauldwell's party, that she would be at no great loss to find another situation; that mothers who had daughters ambitious of such accomplishments as Martha was qualified to teach, would gladly have availed themselves of her services. This, however, was not the case, and those who have some knowledge of the world, will be at no loss to discover the reason. There is a universal prejudice against all persons in humble circumstances who make any pretensions to superiority on the score of talents; and even when such persons have established claims to distinction in a way which cannot be disputed, nor set aside, the world has to forget previous circumstances ere it will award them the applause merited.

In Martha Forrester's case these considerations operated so far against her; the parties to whom she applied being averse to employ

such a prodigy of genius, fearing that were the members of their family ever so clever, the whole merit of their attainments would be attributed to their teacher. But the most serious obstacle to her re-establishment, was created by the never tiring tongue of Mrs Cauldwell, who was always ready and able to give a reason for every thing she did. Now Martha had mortally offended her, and that long-suffering, ill-used woman, took care to have her revenge, by throwing out hints and insinuations against the character of the inoffending girl. She did not dare to charge her directly with any thing improper, but when she called on any of her acquaintances, whom she suspected might harbour any intention of engaging Martha, she was in the habit of hinting in a peculiarly expressive way, that "good-looking governesses were not the best possible inmates of a house where there were inexperienced young men." She would then let fall, as if by chance, that, but for her watchful eye, her son might have brought disgrace on their ancient and honourable family, by marrying the sly huzzy Martha Forrester.

Little did poor Martha suspect the influences that were at work against her, as, from time to time, she vainly applied for situations of which she had heard. In such cases she was generally well received in the first instance by the parties to whom she applied; but was invariably informed, on her second call, she having, in the meantime, made reference to her last employer, that she would not answer. In these cases, Mrs Cauldwell had been consulted, and poor Martha's rejection was the result. Mrs Jolly, her good, old, kind friend, was now dead, and she had no one to confide in, or advise with, but her mother. After each of these cruel disappointments above alluded to, the poor girl would repair with desponding heart to her mother's humble dwelling, where, after a moment's sad and silent reflection, she would burst into tears, and throw her arms in a paroxysm of grief around her mother's neck, who, in turn, would kiss her tears away, and endeavour to comfort her, telling her to be of good cheer, for the Lord would provide for the widow and the fatherless. Then would mother and daughter lift their voices and their eyes together to heaven in fervent prayer, and thereafter would Martha return to her task of thankless and hopeless drudgery with a face beaming with light, and a breast buoyant with renewed hope and happiness.

The day at length arrived when Martha was to leave her situation,—a day which she had long looked forward to with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow; joy, which it was but natural her young heart should feel at being relieved from a state of the most abject slavery, and sorrow for the loss of employment, no door being open to her but that of her poor old widowed mother. She had calculated on being able to contribute to the support of her parent, and it distressed her beyond

measure to think, that, in place of being able to add to her mother's comforts, she would be reduced to the necessity of sharing the scanty pittance which the former derived from the benevolence of friends. Poor Martha, in the sanguineness of youth, had at one time formed certain golden projects, one of which was, that she would be enabled to realize, by teaching, a sufficiency to allow of her renting a snug little cottage, with a grass-plot in front, where her mother might spend her declining years in the way to which she had been accustomed in her early days. This idea had been till now always paramount in Martha's imagination. Alas! it was now rudely dispelled. What a contrast! she was now about to return to reside with her beloved parent, in a small room in a crowded alley in the Old Town of Edinburgh.

Another source of grief to poor Martha was the parting with old Maillie, the ancient serving woman of the Cauldwell family, of whom honourable mention has already been made, but of whom I must now speak at greater length, the important part she is destined subsequently to play in this true and eventful history rendering it necessary that the reader should be fully enlightened as to her history and character.

Old Maillie, as formerly mentioned, had been in the service of the Cauldwell family from time immemorial. She clung to them through good report and bad report; she was what may be called one of the safety-valves of the establishment, through which all ebullitions of passion on the part either of Mrs Cauldwell, or the other members of the family, found ready vent, thus preventing more serious explosions.

Poor Maillie was, however, something more than a mere passive good. She smoothed asperities between mistress and servant, got all the credit or discredit of the parsimony or thrift, as it was variously called, of her mistress; was continually getting notable bargains from fish-women; and was at all seasons and times anxiously alive to the interests of the family. But while careful, to the extreme of penuriousness, of her employer's means, she was ever liberal with her own, having been often known to replace, from her own wages, the heavy stoppages which Mrs Cauldwell had made from the half-year's fee of some poor fellow-servant, for broken crystal, china, or other such like frail and perishable commodities. "The children," as that lady justly remarked, when such accidents occurred, "could not do such a thing, and who was to pay for broken vessels but those who broke them?" Mrs Cauldwell entertained a most profound contempt for Maillie's benevolence of nature. She could not understand it. But she took care to avoid all allusion to it, as it cost her nothing, and was the means of saving numberless lawsuits anent unlawful stoppages, and questionable dismissals, which, but for Maillie's interposition, might have sometimes proved troublesome.

Maillie, kind as her nature was, could, from long habit, look with indifference on the departure of a fellow-servant at term-day. But it was otherwise with her in the case of Martha's removal, for whom she entertained the strongest affection.

On the day of Martha's departure she had risen rather earlier than usual, for the purpose of getting all her little luggage packed up, and when the poor girl was beginning her task of preparation, she was somewhat surprised when old Maillie, after tapping gently at her chamber door, opened it and entered, and kindly proffered her services, first to pack up, and then to remove Martha's luggage.

"Maillie," said Martha, "I was not prepared for this kindness, wherefore are you astir so early? Do, run to bed again, like a good creature, I can manage quite well myself."

"Na, na, lassie," said Maillie, "I'll gang nane to bed; an hour o' a dover is a' the rest I e'er get in the night time, and I haena closed an ee for some nights past wi' the thought o' ye gaun awa to leave me. What will become o' puir auld Maillie when ye are gane?"

"I trust, Maillie," replied Martha, "you will find my successor to be an agreeable person. Your kindness cannot fail to gain her esteem and affection. But for you, my life here must have been miserable, most miserable, and it adds to the pain I feel at parting with you, that I am not able to leave you some substantial proof of my regard."

"Say nae sae, say nae sae, my blooming rose," said Maillie, "my sweet pet, ye hae paid me a hunder times ower. Before ye cam here, I kenned nae what it was to exchange a kindness wi' ony body, an' wassae accustomed to the buffets o' my mistress and the family, that their sour words were like kind o' second-hand compliments to me; but aye sin ye hae been in the house, your hinnied words hae linked themsells round my heart, an' your open countenance has beamed on me like that o' an angel o' light. Alas! alas! now ye are gaun awa to leave auld Maillie in darkness."

"Aye, but Maillie," exclaimed Martha, "you must come down and see me at my mother's; you shall always be welcome; and although in the meantime, our means are scant, and we can offer you but little, my mother will be delighted to see one to whom her daughter owes so much."

"And I," said Maillie, "will be as happy to see your mither. The mither o' sic a daughter may weel be a proud woman. Heaven guard an' protect ye baith, an' may ye lang be spared to ane anither. How lang is it since ye lost your faither?"

"Fourteen years last March," answered Martha.

"What was he to trade, and whaur did he live?" inquired Maillie, adding, "ye'll think it strange, that having never put that question to

you before, for as lang as we hae been thegither, I should do so now ; but the truth is, I was aye feared to raise a tear in your ee. Yet, now, when we're at the partin', I begin to mind a heap o' things that I should hae speered at you lang ago, an' I canna think on lettin' you awa without ha'ein' my curiosity gratified."

" Better late than never, my dear Maillie," said Martha, pausing in her packing operations, and assuming a loftier bearing than Maillie had ever seen her exhibit before. " My father, a man to whom I am proud to have owed my existence, was an honest and intelligent tradesman ; his name was John Forrester. He was a millwright to trade, and resided, at the time of his death, in the village of the Water of Leith."

At this moment, Maillie, who had been busily engaged while listening to Martha, bundling up some of her wearing apparel, suddenly stopped short in her operations, started back, and gazing on Martha with a look of mingled surprise and interest, exclaimed,

" Dear me ! I was surely blind no to make that discovery before, no to see in you, my sweet bairn, the very identical image o' him that's awa. Puir fallow! I think I see him yet, as when he used to come up when a laddie to auld Deanhouse to crack wi' the auld laird, wha was sae fond o' him, and wha used to tell his master to send up nane o' his muckle clumsy journeymen, but just neat-handed wee Johnnie Forrester. I mind o' him growing a stately fallow ; an' I mind when your mither and he were married there wasna their match in seven parishes. Aye ! aye ! Martha Forrester," continued the old woman, now advancing to her, and parting the hair that lay on her forehead with her old trembling hand, " are ye indeed the daughter o' John and Helen Forrester ?"

" I am, indeed, Maillie," answered the girl ; " and I am surprised to find that you know my parents. May I ask how and when you became acquainted with them ? I was not aware that they had any intimacy with any one in Edinburgh ; and you have been so long in this family, that I cannot conceive how you should have known them so well as you appear to do."

" Ay, I hae indeed been a lang time, even the feck o' my lang an' weary life, in this family," replied Maillie ; " I hae seen mair than twa generations o' the Cauldwells come an' gang ; but I havena aye been conneckit wi' this branch o' the family. For lang and mony a day, I staid in the Dean house—a place that ye'll ken brawly, and whaur the brither o' our honest master stays. He, ye ken, was the proprietor o' your mither's cottage, and it was he wha turned her out after the death o' your faither. It wad hae been lang till the day that his faither wad hae dune sic a thing."

" You astonish and distress me by your information, Maillie," said

Martha. "Have I indeed been so long under the roof of the brother of him who so cruelly ejected my mother. How is it that this has never come to my knowledge before?"

"Just because you an' I hae ne'er had a confidential crack before," replied Maillie. "Auld Deanhouse is at daggers drawing just now wi' his brither an' his brither's family, and they havena crossed ither's thresholds, nor mentioned ither's names for years, so that accounts sufficiently for you no having made the discovery before this time."

"And, now, that I have made it," said Martha, "I must keep it from my mother; her proud heart would burst if she knew it. We must keep the secret from her, Maillie."

"Na, na," rejoined Maillie, "we maunna keep it frae her; she maun ken a', sae pack awa there as fast as ye can. We'll hae time enough to get a' thing ready, an' be aff afore there 's ony o' them stirring. I'll accompany ye hame; your mither an' I maun hae a lang crack. Her poverty she has nae reason to think shame o', and she may live to see better times yet."

"And may I ask," inquired Martha, "what station you were in at that time, and how you became acquainted with my father and mother?"

"I was acquainted not only wi' your faither an' mither," answered Maillie, "for they were but bairns to me, my dear, but wi' your grandmither, your mither's mither. Her an' I were in the same family, servin' thegither, an' I was best-maid at her weddin'; an' some folk said an' thought I should hae been the bride on that occasion, but they were wrang, and it was to prove their error I gaed there as bridesmaid. Ah, these were happy days, but I maunna recal them; for, alack! alack! they were followed by days an' years o' misery to me; yet mercy has been mingled in my lot, an' why should I complain? Did ye ever, Martha," continued Maillie, "did ye ever hear your mither or your grandmither speak o' a foster brither o' your faither's, wha, when a laddie, ran awa to sea, an' was never mair heard o'?"

"Yes, often, very often," replied Martha, "have I heard my grandmother speak of him in her latter years. After my father died, she often lamented her lost laddie, as she called him, sometimes charging him in her wandering reveries with being ungrateful no to come hame, now when his brither was gane, an' keep her in her auld days. Then would she break out into a loud laugh, and say that she knew her callant was on his way hame from India, with walth o' red gowd to buy silk braws and flannel hapwarms to his auld foster-mither. Poor body, she died, saying, that she was gaun to meet her ae laddie in glory, and praying that her other might join them there when the Lord's time came."

"An' did ye never hear her say aught o' the parents o' that foster son?" inquired Maillie, with increased earnestness of manner.

"Never," answered Martha.

"Weel, weel," said Maillie, with a faltering voice, betokening an emotion which she seemed anxious to conceal, "it doesna matter." Then, suddenly changing the subject, "we're a' nearly ready now, Martha," she said, "an' I'll gie ye a hand down the street wi' your boxes. Your mither an' I maun hae a lang crack, as I said before, some day soon; but I'll no hae time to stay wi' her e'ennow. However, Martha, hear ye this, neither you nor her shall want, while I hae onything; so, if ye see ye are in a strait, come ye to auld Maillie. I hae been a lang time here, and hae twa three punds in my master's hands, to a share o' whilk ye shall be at a' time welcome; I dinna think I'll ever need it. I ance, indeed, thought I wad liket to hae retired in my auld age to the east neuk o' Fife, whaur I came frae, and in a wee bit cottage hae ended my days whaur I began them. But I hae been sae lang in the Cauldwell family, that I fin' I canna leave them; besides, ye ken, the're aye turnin' the langer the waur, and stand now in mair need o' my services than ever, so I canna leave them in their difficulties. I have been wi' them in prosperity, and maunna leave them in their adversity,—ay, adversity," repeated Maillie, seeing that Martha's looks expressed surprise at the word; "ye maybe dinna ken that the bachelor brither at the Dean has lately threatened to disinherit them a'thegither, and our master, ye ken, has been living far aboon his income, depending on his brither's estate. The misses are useless tangles, and young Mr John is fit for naething but spending siller at card-tables and cock-fighting. So, ye see, I maun just hing on wi' them; I canna think on leaving them."

"Well, Maillie," said Martha, "it is highly creditable to you to cling thus to the family with which you have been so long connected. Your adherence to them, through good and bad report, is much to be admired. But, now," she continued, "the morning brightens; we must be away, and since you are kind enough to offer your services, you will carry that little band box, I will carry the trunk; neither of them are heavy, and we shall manage famously."

Accordingly, after wrapping themselves up in their duffles or cloaks, the two friends sallied forth into the street, now brightened by the first beams of the morning sun, and trudged down the High Street, old Maillie chatting merrily all the way.

I do not know whether our neighbours in the south have any idea of the confusion, the turmoil, the bustle that takes place on the streets of large towns in Scotland, on the morning of the Whitsunday term. This is what is called *flitting* day—the day on which people who are changing their place of residence have their furniture conveyed from one house to the other. Those who have such changes in view are all active early on this busy morning, and many of them spend the whole of the previous night in packing their furniture, and making other preparations for their approaching removal. The key of a house from which a tenant is removing, cannot, according to law, be demanded till twelve o'clock on the noon of the 25th of May, or flitting day; and no removing tenant can retain such key, a moment after that hour, without exposing himself to troublesome consequences. Hence, in a crowded town, like ancient Edinburgh, with its long stairs, its steep interminable alleys, its narrow doorways, many scenes present themselves on such a day, of a very amusing, and, it may be added, national character. It very often happens, that persons moving from one house to another, will, out of a mere spirit of contradiction, retain the keys till the last moment; and the consequence of this evil spirit pervading, as it frequently does, a long series of flitters, is to keep the furniture of all the parties standing in the middle of the street probably for half a day. The instant, however, the critical hour of twelve strikes on old St Giles, the bustle increases. A porter seizes, perchance, a bed, and rushes up a six storey stair with his burden, when, lo! he is met in the narrow turnpike by another descending with a similar load. Neither will give way, yet neither can pass. The upper man having the advantage, and knowing it, too, presses downward; the lower endeavours to resist him. They come into desperate collision, amid volleys of abusive language; and the result is a fearful scene of ruin and destruction, the lower man and his burden being overturned, with the upper man and his load rolling over him.

Many of those, too, who come to assist their friends to remove, get half seas over at a very early stage of the business, and in this state, keep swimming about all day long, doing nothing, but adding to the dire confusion that everywhere prevails.

On all occasions of removal, every good housewife finds the house to which she has moved so dirty, that she cannot think of putting her furniture into the rooms till she has had the painters. The painters, having no powers of ubiquity more than other men, cannot be everywhere at the same time; the busy and anxious goodwife, who has been waiting their arrival all morning, with tucked up sleeves and kilted petticoats, and who had fondly calculated on getting a clear room to lay her bed

in, finds herself, in the end, obliged to bundle her furniture into the various apartments topsy turvy, where it stands for another week, perchance, before she can obtain even a sight of the painters,—at flitting time the most slippery and uncatchable of all the different kinds of tradesmen.

It was not without some little difficulty, and some rough jostlings, that our friends, Martha and Maillie, elbowed their way through the mass of busy people with which the streets were crowded on this stirring morning. Highland chairmen were to be seen trotting hither and thither in all directions, with looks full of business and importance, bearing enormous burdens, and thrusting aside, without ceremony, all who stood in their way. Porters, too, with heavily laden barrows or heaped up *creels* might be both seen and heard in all quarters, wrangling and quarrelling anent—who can tell what. Old tottering women were there, carrying earthenware in baskets, or birds in cages, or cats in bags. Children, too, were seen rolled up in blankets, and stuffed into tubs or baskets, where they sat crowing away with the utmost delight, while their mothers were busied with other matters. Chubby faced youngsters were romping about, rejoicing and revelling in the unwonted excitement, and delighted with the idea of "gaun to a new house." Old men and old women were moving along like spectres, silent and sad, as if they never expected to have removed from their old dwellings until they were carried to their last homes.

The very different feelings with which the young and old are impressed on such occasions, present a very striking and not uninstructive contrast; and even in the very furniture which is brought to light, in many instances for the first time for many years, the philosophical and reflective mind will find much not unworthy of its contemplation. Here are some old bedsteads, crazed, disjointed, and evidently sensible that their days are gone by, and that they can never again be made useful;—there old corner cupboards, exposing their worm-eaten backs, overgrown with the cobwebs of half a century, to the vulgar gaze, putting deception out, and giving the lie to their bright and polished fronts;—here a young man is heard shouting at the top of his voice to an old woman, who is carrying off an old chair, with an air of stout and earnest determination,—"Leave that auld rotten chair, mother, it's no worth the liftin'." "Indeed I winna leave the chair," replies the old dame; "it's the chair I nursed ye on, ye wasterfu' loun, an' it will aiblins serve your wife to nurse your ain son on yet. The chair is no ae hair the waur o' the wear yet!" There serving maidens, with sooty faces, are carrying pots, pans, kettles, and other kitchen utensils, and sorely afraid lest their lovers should happen to see them in such deplorable plight. In short, a flitting morning, although amusing enough, is not a

morning either for romance writers or readers to be abroad in; and so I stop short in my description.

After not a little jostling and knocking, and after having been nearly choked with the simoom of chaff, feathers, and dust, which was rushing along the street and darkening the air, Martha and Maillie reached the dwelling of Mrs Forrester. Martha found her mother in a state of preparation for her reception. A bright fire blazed in the grate; the breakfast cups stood on the table, and everything looked tidy and comfortable. The widow was so engrossed by the contemplation of her daughter, that she did not for a moment observe her companion. Martha, however, quickly introduced her. On the latter removing the hood of her cloak, and exposing her head and face fully, Mrs Forrester gazed on her with a look of intense interest. Some old recollections seemed to rush on her memory. Again and again she looked at her, and now she seized her by both hands, and exclaimed,

"Maillie Mathison are you alive!"

"Aye, and like to live langer," said Maillie, "now when I hae met wi' you, Helen Forrester."

And old Maillie held out her hand to Mrs Forrester, and Mrs Forrester grasped it warmly and cordially, and the old friends sat down to breakfast, and rehearsed to each other the history of their past lives, reminding one another of events which had taken place in days long gone by. Their countenances became flushed and animated; their eyes waxed more eloquent than their tongues; and, under the excitement of the moment, they felt as if they were young again. They talked of the Cauldwells, of Forrester's foster-brother, and various other matters, until Maillie, beginning to fear she might be missed by her ever-watchful mistress, took her leave, having previously promised to call on an early subsequent day.

CHAPTER IV.

Like aye draws to like,
An auld horse to a feal dike.
Old Proverb.

Widow Forrester, at the time her daughter came to reside with her, occupied a portion of a very ancient tenement, which had once been the town mansion-house of some distinguished family. This edifice stood in one of the alleys entering from the Canongate, and in the immediate vicinity of the Palace of Holyrood House. It was impossible to contemplate this old, rough, weather-beaten building without feelings of veneration; its antique appearance, taken in conjunction with the ancient locality in which it was situated, being eminently calculated to give rise to many interesting reflections. The entrance door way was surmounted by a lofty angular pediment, containing the armorial bearings of a noble family, having their initials fantastically and ingeniously entwined, and bearing the date 1611. The window tops were all ornamented in a similar manner, those in the upper story rising in the French style, high above the eaves of the steep roof from which they sprung, and tapering gracefully to points, terminating with the favourite architectural ornaments of the day, the thistle, the *fleur-de-lis*, and the crescent. There was also a tall narrow window, extending through the depth of two entire storeys of the building, which indicated the family chapel, now, alas! a damp and mouldy vault. There was the heavy oaken staircase door, with its old-fashioned risp, and its huge staple hinges. This door was fastened at night by an enormous wooden bar, which slipped into a large square aperture in the wall lined with wood,—the said aperture being very apt to remind one of the loyal devotion of the lady, who thrust her arm as a bar into some such receptacle, to prevent the entrance of the conspirators who murdered James I.

The building enclosed three sides of a small square paved court-yard, separated from the alley by a wall, in the centre of which were the remains of a very richly ornamented gateway.

Two centuries, however, had elapsed since this house was occupied by a tenant of the rank for which it was originally intended. Like other buildings of a similar kind it had lost caste, and at the period at which a portion of it was inhabited by Mrs Forrester, the other parts of it were tenanted by persons of a very remarkable description. These were no other than a colony of old women, consisting of widows and old maiden daughters of merchants or tradesmen, probably a little reduced in circumstances, but still retaining all the stateliness of their ancient dignity. Traces of the high toned style of Edinburgh breeding during the early part of the last century, were distinctly visible in their dignified carriage, heightened in effect by their frizzled heads, vandyked ruffs, and antique dresses; while the correctly measured, though broadly marked, national character of their conversation, forcibly recalled times when the educated classes in Scotland deemed it no impropriety to express themselves in their vernacular tongue. Some of these old ladies lived on very small allowances from their relatives; others on annuities from institutions with which their families had been connected. Sooth to say, it took little to keep them, for they were seldom at home; they had so many friends and acquaintances dispersed throughout the town, who were glad, nay proud, at all times of a call from them, that the greater number of this ancient stairhead fraternity, generally dined out, at least three times a-week: a circumstance which helped to spin out their limited means wonderfully, and enabled them to dress and conduct themselves altogether as if they were persons of condition and of fortune.

The old proverb, at the head of this chapter, was never more fully verified than in the instance of this sisterly association, the mutual wants and inabilities of whose members seemed but to strengthen the bonds of affection in which they were united; an affection, the results of which were as beneficial to themselves, as the principle from which it sprung was morally beautiful.

These dames were all clean and tidy in their habits, and their little domiciles were patterns of neatness and order. All that whitewash could do for the roofs and walls of their apartments was regularly done every spring. The doors, wooden presses, and every article of furniture, was scrubbed and polished till it shone again. Under their combined auspices, the steps of the stair, the door-piece, the window rybats, were all kept as clean and bright as washing, brushing, and pipeclaying could make them. Their windows were all adorned with flowers; and the deep green leaves of the mignionette, scarlet runners,

and geraniums, with their pink and white flowers, relieved by the white back grounds, looked even brighter and greener than the plants and flowers of the garden, while the fragrance seemed, by contrast of situation, more delightful to those who visited this interesting locality. The little paved court in front, too, was swept clean every morning, and there being no children to disturb the cloistered serenity of the place, it presented the very beau ideal of urban seclusion.

The limited means of these ancient ladies preventing them employing either water carriers or caddies, they made all their own little marketings, and carried home their purchases. They might thus have been seen in the mornings tottering up and down the alley in their morning caps and short gowns, some carrying brown stoneware pitchers full of water, others small packets of tea, sugar, and other necessaries for the morning meal, all cheerful, and all exchanging compliments with each other as they met or passed. After breakfast they generally appeared in full dress, many of them arrayed in black silk gowns, bonnets, and cloaks, in which they made their forenoon calls, and which, the moment they returned, were consigned to their old quarters in an antique pot-bellied chest of drawers.

There was no written or printed code of laws to regulate the social duties of this sisterhood; but there was what is infinitely better, a desire to lighten each other's burdens, and a wish to cheer each other's hearts. They had, no doubt, occasional bickerings amongst themselves, but these were few and far between, and tended only to strengthen those affections which a similarity of fortune had engendered. If at any time any foreign invader came with hostile intent among them, or any aggression was made from without, all their little differences were instantly forgotten; and their combined energies were directed to the expulsion or repulsion of the enemy, who rarely could keep his ground against the formidable assault. But, when sickness or death came among them, then it was that their sympathies with each other shone forth in the strongest and most pleasing light.

Such were the persons among whom Martha Forrester went to live when she left the service of the Cauldwells. The poor girl was received by the old ladies in the kindest manner, and her beauty and amiable disposition quickly secured her their warmest regards. Martha, in short, soon found that she was in the midst of warm-hearted and hospitable friends. Tea parties were made up, and held in every house in succession on her account, the old ladies being delighted with having one so young and so fair amongst them. They were themselves all past that period of life when Martha's charms might have excited a feeling of jealousy. They rather looked on her as a daughter who belonged to them all in common. Such being the case, they occasion-

ally indulged in a few reflections on the Cauldwells in reference to their treatment of Martha, not particularly flattering to that very respectable family.

"Luckie Cauldwell," exclaimed Mrs Muckle, a jeweller's widow, "I mind o' the wee, fat, dirty, creature, when she had scarcely a shoe to her feet, or a gown to her back. My certie, it sets her weel to cock her head sae heigh. No ane o' a' her hale race could haud a candle, or tie a shoe, to sic as our bonny Martha Forrester. Do ye mind o' them?" she continued, bawling into the ear of an old deaf maiden lady, who had been brought up in the neighbourhood with the querist and Mrs Cauldwell—"Do ye mind o' her, Nelly?"

"Mind o' wha, Jenny?" said the latter.

"O' Jenny Linklater that was, Jenny Cauldwell that is, the glaiket hizzy, wha was married to the lawyer o' that name," shouted Mrs Muckle.

"Mind her! mind Jenny Linklater!" replied the deaf old lady in tones of deep indignation, and with an air of supreme contempt, "Aye, that I do. Weel do I mind o' her when she was a barefitted, barcheaded, lassie, who was wont to be blythe to get a cog o' parritch at our kitchen fireside wi' her sister, who was my mither's scullion. My certie! it's a pity that the like o' her should hae it in her power to domineer ower the like o' Martha Forrester, wha's fit to be companion to a duchess. But, bide a wee, bide a wee, Martha will see day about wi' her yet. They ne'er thrive wha oppress the widow an' the orphan. Lang, pompous, Jock Cauldwell, wasna aye sic a braw man as he is now, an' they wha carry a high head are aye getting dunts on the crown."

"Deil! nor his crown was cloured," shouted Mrs Muckle.

"It wad only be makin' him father-like, to sic a crack-skulled family as he has; his bairns are a' daft thegither," quietly remarked the deaf lady to herself, as she sipped her cup of tea, and then resumed. "Martha Forrester will see day aboot wi' Jenny Linklater yet. There ne'er was a height but there aye was a howe at the back o't, an' pride, as Solomon says, aye gangs afore a fa'."

In such terms did the worthy sisterhood talk of the Cauldwells, not only amongst themselves, but amongst their friends and relatives, when they visited them, taking every opportunity of expressing their indignation at the conduct of that family to Martha, and of extolling the character of the latter. In this way was Martha in a short time made favourably known to a number of comfortable old-fashioned families, from whom she received as much employment for her needle as she could accomplish, although it still required the most laborious application to enable her to earn a living for herself and her mother.

Thus did Martha continue to reside from week to week, and from

month to month amongst these ancient dames, whose fondest regards she won by a thousand little services, and particularly by the tender assiduity with which she watched by the bedsides, and supplied the wants, of the ailing amongst them. Gently, gently, like a ministering angel, did she hover about them, guessing and fulfilling their wishes, even before they were expressed; and she became so entwined around their hearts, that they knew no greater solace than confiding to her all their little hopes and fears.

In the mornings, Martha was always the soonest up, and her first business was to boil the tea-kettle that she might have hot water in readiness for the tea-pots of her ancient neighbours, who she knew delighted in an early cup of the refreshing beverage. Thus they were consequently seen every morning in their flannel caps and night-gowns making their way into Mrs Forrester's kitchen, each carrying a little black tea-pot to get filled with the boiling water which Martha's forethought and activity had provided. Then leaving the said little tea-pots on Mrs Forrester's hearth to "draw," where often half a dozen might be seen all in a row, they would hasten back to their own apartments, hurry on the remainder of their morning dress, and after kindling their fires, they would return, one after another, and each carry off with pleasure her "weel masked cup o' tea."

When any one of the old ladies had gone a marketing, Martha was always on the watch for her return, and the moment she appeared in the little court loaded with her basket, she would rush down stairs, and relieving her of her burden, would carry it up; the old lady breathlessly following, leaning on her staff, and blessing the kind and affectionate girl, who felt the balmy influences of her benediction in the utmost depths of her pure and guileless bosom.

It must be confessed, however, that Martha's finances were by no means improved by her endeavours to contribute to the comforts of her good neighbours. The work she got into her mother's house to execute was, as formerly noticed, very tedious, and the remuneration inadequate. Hence the income on which she and her mother had to subsist was extremely limited, and it was with considerable difficulty that Mrs Forrester, notwithstanding all her thrift, could "mak ends meet." The widow, however, was high-spirited though poor, and, like the majority of her country people, had a horror of living on charity. Neither, poor as she was, could she brook the idea of depending for support on any other source than her own and her daughter's industry. Acting on these principles, she managed her limited means so judiciously, that even when reduced to the very brink of extreme poverty, her little room still remained clean and tidy, her countenance cheerful, and if sorrows there were, she kept them locked up in her own breast.

Thus no one ever saw her melancholy, or heard her complain. With all this apparent indifference to her own sufferings, Mrs Forrester's heart was always overflowing with sympathy for the afflictions of her neighbours, who often sought, and often availed themselves, to their advantage, of her counsel and advice. She was a woman of strong common sense, as well as of fine feelings, and her matured judgment seldom failed to point out the best course to pursue. Her qualities were thus more useful than they were publicly acknowledged to be, and she was more highly respected than perhaps either herself or any one else imagined.

Such a mother as Mrs Forrester would not, of course, stand in the way of her daughter's bettering her circumstances; and although she dearly loved Martha, and felt keenly and deeply how painful it would be to part with her, yet her good sense enabled her to see the propriety of her daughter's using every exertion to procure a situation, where her talents, natural and acquired, might be brought into play, and turned to advantage. With this view, their ancient friends and kind neighbours were all enlisted in the cause, and in their journeyings and wanderings to and fro amongst their friends, they each and all made every inquiry on the subject, although they felt that in the removal of Martha from amongst them, they would sustain a severe and irreparable loss. Dear, good, kind souls, every forenoon as they passed Mrs Forrester's door, arrayed in their best, being about to sally forth on a visiting excursion, would they pop in their heads with a "Tak heart, Martha, dear, there's sure to be something gude in store for you the day;" and as often, alas! would they come back at nightfall with a long catalogue of places, not one of which were suitable. The zeal of these good ladies in Martha's behalf, induced them to imagine that she could overcome impossibilities, and could accommodate herself to any place. The poor girl was thus often rudely repulsed, in consequence of her well meaning old friends sending her to make application for situations for which she was altogether unfitted.

The sunny days of summer, and the glowing months of autumn, had passed away, and winter, with her cold withering breath and snowy plumed crest, found Martha still under her mother's roof. All her applications for a situation had been unsuccessful, all her exertions vain. Often had she been on the point of obtaining what she so anxiously sought for, when some untoward circumstance came in the way, and dashed the cup from her lips. Poor Martha began to get disheartened, and the harsh rejections she at times met with in quarters where they might have been least expected, had such a withering effect on her spirits, that she seemed at last to have lost all hope, and to have abandoned herself to her fate. Her despondency grieved and distressed

her mother, who saw with sorrow her cheeks gradually losing their colour, her eyes their lustre, and her step its wonted lightness and elasticity. Her kindly old neighbour matrons, too, saw with alarm and regret, the effect of so many repeated disappointments on their young favourite, and they resolved on doubling their efforts in her behalf. They did so, and it was with feelings of no little delight that one day shortly thereafter, old Mrs Muckle, who was a great politician, brought the Caledonian Mercury to Martha, containing the following advertisement:—

"Wanted a young woman, not exceeding twenty-four years of age, to act as governess to some young ladies, who intend visiting London in the course of the ensuing summer. If, upon trial, the manners, morals, and accomplishments of the person now advertised for, prove satisfactory, she will be invited to accompany her pupils in their travels. Apply, by letter, to J. C., Post-Office."

Here, then, was a situation admirably adapted apparently for Martha. Here was something for which it was worth while making an effort. Mrs Forrester, although grieved exceedingly at the prospect of a probable separation from her beloved daughter for a time, was anxious that she should use every exertion to secure the appointment. Nor were her kind old neighbours wanting in their duty on the occasion. In full and solemn conclave assembled, they resolved on backing Martha's application with all the means in their power. In pursuance of this resolution, they all set off in various directions to beat up friends and acquaintances for certificates and recommendations. Many of the documents, which they thus procured, were so flattering, that poor, simple Martha marvelled much how so many persons, comparative strangers to her, could say so many good things of her. Poor girl, had she asked from them pudding, instead of praise, how different would have been the result. Fortunately Martha was not aware of this distinction, and it was with high spirits, and a light step, she set out to deposit her letter and recommendations in the receiving-box of the Old Edinburgh Post-Office.

Having reached the Post-Office, which was then in North Bridge Street, Martha proceeded into a small dingy apartment or passage, wherein the receiving-box was placed, with a dark window over it, in which all the letters to be called for, as well as those the postman had been unsuccessful in finding owners for, were placed. Some were stuck here, some there, some turned upside down, some with the wafered side outwards, others standing on end; and a few, a very few, as they ought to be, namely, with their full front exposed, so that the reading of them, in nearly all the cases difficult, was in many impossible.

Martha had frequently been at the Post-Office, both when a child

in the Hospital, and while governess to the Cauldwells, and on these occasions her curiosity used to be excited by these ownerless letters, the superscriptions of which she took a great interest in reading, when their position admitted of this gratification. Often did she in these cases, with laudable feeling, wish that she could be assured that these letters would find the persons for whom they were intended. Often did she regret that she could not point them out. How gladly would she have travelled miles to inform some anxious wife that a letter from her absent husband lay for her in the Post-Office. On observing one written in an almost unintelligible hand, having the soldiers' frank on it, and directed to some widow, much would Martha have given to learn where that widow was to be found, to have carried the precious document to her, to have gladdened her lone heart, by deciphering for her the unskilfully traced but warm dictates of filial affection,—the hand that had penned the letter having probably been ere this laid powerless and prostrate on a battle field in some foreign land.

On the occasion of Martha's present visit, there was no one in the lobby but herself, and, as was her usual custom, she began reading the directions on the letters in the window, although it was so dark that she had difficulty in making out the names, even of those that were fairly exposed. Having amused herself thus for some time, she was about to turn away, when the word "Widow," on the corner of a letter projecting from behind another caught her eye. This being a kind of superscription that always deeply interested Martha, she again approached close to the window, and standing on tiptoe, made out, after an effort, and to her inexpressible surprise, "Widow Forrester, Edinburgh." Unable to believe her eyes, again she raised herself on tiptoe, again read the address, and again found it to be Widow Forrester distinctly. Could it be for her mother? By peering closely in at the window she was enabled to make out the remainder of the superscription. It was written in a strong, but not very legible hand, and ran thus, "Widow Forrester, relict of John Forrester, millwright, late of the Water of Leith." A moment of breathless suspense ensued; Martha knew not precisely what to do; she hesitated, nay, trembled, with anxiety and agitation. At length summoning courage, she tapped at the little wicket at which the letters in the window were delivered, on being asked and paid for. It was opened by a tall, stiff, black-headed, huge whiskered fellow, whom Martha instantly recognised as a friend of her late employer's son, Mr John Cauldwell junior, who thrust his head out of the wicket, stared impudently at Martha for a second or two, then throwing himself back in his seat with a consequential and self-dignified air, said, in a tone of insolent affectation—

"Well, young woman, what do you want?"

Martha was much fluttered and excited, for this was one of the young men who, on the night of the ball at Cauldwell's, had shown her the particular, though undesired attentions, formerly noticed, and it was sometime before she could muster courage to say—

"There is a letter, sir, in your window, which I think is for my mother, and if so, I should like to have it."

The black-whiskered gentleman again looked hardly at her, and inquired—

"Who is your mother?"

"Widow Forrester, sir," replied Martha timidly, and blushing while she spoke.

"Aye, and whereabouts, if you please, does Widow Forrester reside, my good girl?" rejoined the black-whiskered gentleman.

"In the Canongate, sir, in Hammerman's Close," answered Martha.

"Then, if your mother resides in Hammerman's Close, Canongate, why do you come here to inquire for her?" said the dignified official.

"You mistake me, sir," replied Martha, "I did not inquire for my mother, but for a letter addressed to her, which I see in your window."

"O! I beg pardon, my dear," exclaimed the gentleman, with a mixture of offensive familiarity and ironical politeness. "But if there be a letter for your very respectable mother in my window, you must do me the favour to point it out. I can't be at the trouble of looking for it."

Feeling keenly, but overlooking the insolent manner of the fellow, Martha went to the window, placed her finger opposite the letter, and while she did so, turned aside her blushing face, as she thought she could discern eyes peering at her through the glass. Some time elapsed before the black-whiskered gentleman removed the letter. When Martha returned to the wicket, he again looked at her with an air of cool impertinence, and said—

"Twopence to pay, if you please."

Now, it had never occurred to Martha that there would be any thing to pay. She never thought of it, otherwise she certainly would not have asked for the letter, being aware that she had no money. When the demand was made, however, she put her hand involuntarily into her pocket, but instantly withdrew it, recollecting she had no money on her, and stammering and blushing, said—

"I beg pardon, sir, but I was not aware that there would be any thing to pay. I shall call again presently."

"Oh, aye, call again," said he of the black countenance, sneeringly, "Aye, aye, we have plenty of promise-to-call-again customers. But the letter can't be retained here any longer. It must be instantly

returned to the writer," and so saying, he slammed to the little wicket in Marthas's face. The poor girl, thus rudely treated, left the office, and bent her steps homeward.

The instant she was gone the black-whiskered gentleman, turning to a brother official of the slap-up genus, who had been waiting the result of the conversation, exclaimed, " By Jove, Jack, it's her, and a devilish fine girl she is."

" No doubt of it," answered Jack, who was no other than Mr John Cauldwell, the promising heir to the Cauldwell estate, who was waiting on his friend of the black-whiskers, previous to their going together to dine with the Edinburgh Cock fighting Club, a worthy body of gentlemen, who met almost every afternoon to fight cocks, and once every week to dine. " No doubt of it; she is a devilish fine girl, but d——d saucy, and so cursedly proud, though poor, that there is nothing to be made of her. But what can the letter be about that she is so anxious to get hold of?"

" Don't know, Jack, but will soon. Here goes," said he of the black phiz, cooly breaking the seal of Flemyng's letter, for it was no other than the communication elsewhere alluded to, from that worthy person, and proceeding to read over the miller's kind invitation to the widow to call upon him, as he had good news to tell her anent her husband's foster-brother, who was, he said, " alive, wealthy, and soon to return home to adopt her as his sister, and her daughter as his heiress."

" By Jove, Jack, here is something extraordinary," said the faithful Post-Office official on reading the letter. " Here's the poor girl that was kicked out of your house without ceremony, now about to become rich, and in her turn triumph over you. You must be after her, catch her, and play the agreeable to her; she can't know any thing of this, nor must she for some time."

Jack, who had at all times a sharp wit, and a sharp eye for roguery, saw his game at once. His first proceeding in the present case was to snatch the letter from his friend's hand, and to thrust it into the fire. " Excuse me to the club should I be rather late," he said, and having done this, he rushed out of the office, down the High Street, and overtook Martha just as she was passing the Netherbow Port.

By this time the dusky shades of evening were falling on the city, and that narrow portion of the street above alluded to, at all times gloomy, was already wrapped in almost total darkness. Martha was walking at rather a slow pace, and it was thus that young Cauldwell so quickly overtook her. The poor girl had, indeed, little heart to walk homeward at a quick pace, for she knew well that her mother had not at that moment even the small sum requisite to pay for the letter. Work had been scarce for some time, so that, notwithstanding

all their economy, she and her mother had been reduced to very trying straits. So far as invitations to tea, and other little kind attentions on the parts of their neighbours could alleviate their misery, they were not awanting. But such invitations, when they themselves had nothing, were always hesitatingly accepted; and as to borrowing money from them, even the smallest trifle, neither Martha nor her mother would have done so for worlds. Both the grocer and the baker at the head of the close would readily credit Mrs Forrester, of whose integrity they had a high opinion, to any amount, and at times she was under the necessity of availing herself of their confidence, so far as to run a small account for bread; but money she would borrow from no one.

Martha had just been considering with herself whether or not this rule should not be set aside in the present emergency, and she had almost formed the resolution of asking her mother for leave to apply to some of their kind old neighbours for the small sum requisite to pay the letter, when Mr John Cauldwell, touching her on the shoulder, thus familiarly addressed her:—

"Well, Miss Martha, whither away so fast, wont you speak with an old friend—how is your mother? Have you no message to send to your old pupils? They will be happy to hear from you."

Martha stopped for an instant at this unexpected interruption, and felt that the tone and manner in which she had been addressed had something in them very like insult. Poor Martha knew Cauldwell of old, and had been annoyed by his importunities, the remembrance of which she had locked up in her own heart, resolving that the world should know nothing of them. She had done so at the time, rather than expose him to the resentment of his, as she then thought him, upright father. Young men in upper life, she knew, were frequently rude to young women of inferior station, and she had hoped that Mr John Cauldwell, with the example of his excellent father before him, would have grown wiser as he grew older. She had cause, however, to alter her opinion of Mr Cauldwell himself, as well as of his promising son, long before she left their employment; and although she had not seen the young man since she had gone home to reside with her mother, she knew him instantly, and while the sound of his voice rung in her ears, she felt a secret horror creeping over her. Unable to utter a word in reply to Cauldwell's address, she hurried onward, the young man persisting in accompanying her.

"Miss Forrester," he again exclaimed, with an earnestness that for the moment threw Martha off her guard, "why will you refuse me this opportunity of explaining myself? There is a misunderstanding between you and the other members of my family, yet why should you

ACTIVE SYMPATHY

extend your ill-will, your displeasure, to one who lives but to admire, to love, to adore you."

To the first part of this sentence Martha listened patiently, thinking it was meant to preface some explanation connected with the conduct of the Cauldwells towards her, which, so much disposed was she to think well of every body, she would have been glad to have heard. When, however, he came to the conclusion, which was but a repetition of sentiments she had often before been obliged to listen to, she drew herself back from him with a look and manner expressive of deep indignation, and firmly, but calmly, said—

"I beg, sir, you will refrain from molesting me with your importunities; I have no wish to hold any further communication with you or your family. Neither is this a fitting time or place for explanation. Allow me to pass, sir."

"Oh, surely, my dear, surely," replied Master Cauldwell, I shall not only allow you to pass, but shall pass on with you, and we shall have a talk over old times as we go. Martha, how I do love to pronounce that name. It is so beautiful, and you are so pretty, and I do so love and adore you, my angel, and"—At this moment they had arrived at the mouth of the dark-browed close or entrance that led to Martha's place of residence, and as she timorously entered its gloomy portal, Cauldwell pushed in along with her, and mistaking the timidity of the trembling and silent girl for a disposition to allow him an opportunity of continuing his suit, nay, taking advantage of the darkness, he had the effrontery to take hold of one of Martha's hands, and to pass an arm around her waist. Confounded by this unexpected insult, Martha made some frantic efforts to free herself from Cauldwell's grasp. Finding this vain, she shrieked aloud, making the roof of the arched gateway ring with her cries, when suddenly Cauldwell received such a blow as caused him not only to relax his hold of Martha, but brought him prostrate to the ground. In nearly the same instant the poor girl herself sunk senselesss into the arms of her deliverer.

Martha's cries having alarmed the whole neighbourhood, lights were now seen moving in all directions, and amongst those who hurried to her aid, were a number of her old friends, with lamps and candles in their hands, marvelling much what could have happened to their beloved Martha, whose well known voice they readily recognised. Under their directions, and with the assistance of these kind old ladies, the fainting girl was conveyed in to her mother's house.

The person who had come thus timeously to Martha's assistance was a stranger to all present. He was a young man, and apparently a tradesman. His figure was above the average height. His countenance was open and manly, and his bearing indicated great energy of

character. Having, under the direction of the old ladies, conveyed his fair burden into her mother's house, the young man briefly explained what had happened, and added, addressing himself to Mrs Forrester "that he was most happy in having been the humble instrument of rescuing her daughter from insult, and that he hoped she would soon recover from her present state of agitation and alarm."

It was little wonder that the sympathy of the stranger was awakened in behalf of poor Martha, who lay before him motionless and pale in the arms of her mother, who was chafing her temples with her hand, and mourning over her in deep sorrow. The whole of the sisterhood were also in a state of extreme alarm. Their dear Martha had been rudely insulted at the threshold of her own home, and the idea had roused the indignation of the ancient dames to the highest pitch. With kind and anxious solicitude they now ran backwards and forwards, bringing every thing they thought might prove conducive to the recovery of their favourite. They ransacked their old-fashioned cupboards and cabinets, and dragged thence numberless long-necked, twisted smelling bottles, containing essences, every one of more intolerable pungency than another. Now, too, came one with a basin of cold water, into which she immersed Martha's fair hands, while another parted the long ringlets that hung over her snowy brow, and laved her temples with the cooling element. Every one, in short, was more busy than another in bringing aid to the still senseless girl, muttering, as they bustled about, "Dear Martha," "sweet Martha," "brave fellow," "good, brave lad," and other such exclamations as expressed the mingled feelings excited by the occasion. At length Martha opened her eyes, and exhibited signs of returning consciousness, to the great delight of the young stranger, who had been awaiting this result with the most intense anxiety. In a few moments more, Martha was so far recovered as to be able to thank him for his kind and timeous interference in her behalf, which she did modestly and briefly, but in such a musically toned voice, that the stranger stood wrapt in speechless admiration.

"I know not," exclaimed Mrs Forrester, addressing herself to the stranger with much earnestness, "I know not, sir, how to thank you for the great service you have rendered my dear child. I have not words at command to express my feelings; neither have I at present means to evince my gratitude to you in any other way than by this simple acknowledgement."

"Madam," replied the youth, laying his hand on his heart, "I feel reward sufficient here, and if you will allow me liberty to make your acquaintance, to seek your esteem, I shall indeed be happy."

"Be assured, young man," answered the widow, "you already have my esteem and friendship, and that by an act of kindness which nei-

ther I nor my child can either repay or forget. Though poor, we are grateful, and shall always be most happy to see you under our humble roof."

"An' I," said Mrs Muckle, who had been one of the most active and busy among the old ladies in attendance on Martha; "an' a' the neighbourhood will aye be blythe to see ye, lad. My word, ye set your claith weel, lad; and ye gae the fause cheeld a lounderin' he winna forget in a hurry. What like a spark was he?"

"I had no opportunity of seeing him, madam," answered the youth, "for, as I told you, he made his escape under cover of the darkness, and seemed afraid of being known. Darkness always flees from light, cowardice and guilt dwell together."

"Aye, an' a cauld hame they mak o't," answered honest Luckie Muckle. "Whaur there's siccan companions there canna be muckle comfort. An honest heart can mak a humble hame a couthie dwellin', sae, lad, ye'll come on yet. What line o' life are ye in, gin I might speer? Ye needna think shame o' your hodden grey, lad, it's your ain an' paid for, I'll warrant ye."

"Yes, madam," said the youth with a smile, "and ilka steek my ain winning. I have had to support myself from boyhood, and now that I have finished my apprenticeship, and am earning a good wage, I feel that the worst of my days are past."

"Gude grant they may be sae, my hinny," replied Mrs Muckle. "Ye'll hae had a gey hard warstle wi' the warld, I'll warrant ye. Had ye neither faither nor mother to gie ye a hand forward?"

"Neither, madam," answered the youth, "both my parents died whilst I was very young, and I scarcely remember them. Any education I got was at a charity school, from which I was sent at a very early period of my life to my trade, and consequently my education was very imperfect. By reading and self-teaching at my leisure hours, however, I have in some measure made up the deficiency.

"Very laudable and praiseworthy, indeed," exclaimed Mrs Muckle. "An' may I ask what is your trade?"

"A millwright, madam," answered the stranger.

"Indeed," interrupted Mrs Forrester, in an earnest manner, and with considerable emotion, "And may I ask where you are employed?"

"In the Abbey Hill, madam," replied the youth. "I served my apprenticeship with Mr Pirie there, and I still continue in his employment."

"I know Mr Pirie well," said Mrs Forrester, "he and my husband served their apprenticeships together in the Water of Leith."

At this allusion to her father and the Water of Leith, Martha, who had now entirely recovered from her fright, and who had listened to the conversation above recorded with breathless interest, started suddenly to her feet. She had been reminded by these allusions of the letter which lay in the Post-Office, addressed to her mother, and she exclaimed—

"My dear mother, I had forgotten to inform you that there is a letter addressed to you as the widow of John Forrester, late of the Water of Leith, lying in the Post-Office."

"What, Martha, a letter for me?" rejoined the widow, "And why did you not bring it with you? Or have you lost it in consequence of the fright you were put into?"

"Nay, mother," said Martha hesitatingly, and blushing deeply, "I had no money with me. There was something to pay for it, and, of course, I could not bring it away. But now that I feel well again, I shall return for it. It may contain some good news from some quarter or other."

Alas, alas!" exclaimed the widow, "from what quarter can good news come to me? My friends are few, and so are my correspondents. Yet I am anxious to see the letter. It is such an uncommon circumstance, such a strange thing, that there should be a letter lying in the Post-Office for me, that I feel a great curiosity to see it. But I shall go for it myself, my dear. I shall not allow you to venture out to-night again."

"Ye'll do nae sic thing, Widow Forrester," said Mrs Muckle. "Ye'll no leave your ain house this night. Just stay ye still, an' I'll gang up stairs and get on my hapwarms, and rin up to the Post-Office in a jiffie."

"Exceedingly kind of you, Mrs Muckle," replied Martha, "but now I recollect the person at the Post-Office said something about returning the letter to those who sent it, unless quickly called for. I am afraid that my indisposition has been the cause of too much delay already, so, if you please, I shall run myself."

"I beg pardon for interfering in this matter," interposed Martha's deliverer, who had been contemplating her fine figure, and listening again to the sweet tones of her musical voice in mute admiration. "I beg pardon, but if you will allow me to be your substitute, I shall be most proud of the mission, and shall execute it faithfully and promptly."

"That's a gude fallow; that's a gude lad," exclaimed Mrs Muckle; "Rin awa' up, then, for the letter, an' when ye come back, you and Martha an' Mrs Forrester will just come up the stair to my house, an' we'll hae our four hours thegither. The tea-pat has been simmering by the fire this hour, and I'll ensure ye o' a gude cup o' tea."

"Well," said Mrs Forrester, "I see I must submit to be plunged deeper and deeper into your debt, young man; so if you will be kind enough to execute this little mission for us, be assured it will be gratefully remembered."

Ere Mrs Forrester had concluded, the young man was making for the door, and in a minute after was on his way to the Post-Office; but before giving an account of his reception there, it is necessary to revert to Mr John Cauldwell, of whose inglorious retreat the reader will have a distinct recollection.

On getting to his feet on the occasion alluded to, that young gentleman's first impulse was to attack his assaulter; but his courage failed him, and instead of confronting the enemy, he took to his heels. Mr John Cauldwell, besides, like every one else who has little character to lose, was on the present occasion chary of his reputation—and this was another reason for his stealing off as quietly and as quickly as he could. He was aware that Martha knew him perfectly, but he believed that she would not expose him. She had mentioned his former importunities to no one, and he had no doubt she would be equally considerate towards him as regarded the present. His confidence in Martha's discretion, however, of which he was so unworthy an object, did not prevent him entertaining a spirit of the most bitter revenge both against her and her deliverer.

The splendid suit of clothes with which Mr John Cauldwell had intended to delight the eyes of the members of the Edinburgh Cock-Fighting Club at dinner that evening, had been so soiled and begrimed by his prostration in the gutter, that he was obliged to abandon all idea of presenting himself to that venerable body. Nay, in such a deplorable condition of filth was he, that he was obliged to skulk under the shade of the houses, to avoid being subjected to the public gaze: and thus stealing along, he at length reached the Post-Office, and dived into the apartment, where sat gasping and gaping, and longing for the dinner hour of the club, which was five, his friend of the black whiskers. That gentleman, who had been cogitating on the probable success of Jack's suit, had been hugging himself on the prospect of having a pleasant lark with his friend, who, after such an adventure, would likely, as he thought, be in high spirits. Thus communing with his own thoughts, he sat on his tall official stool, dangling his watch-chain, wearying for the hour when he would be relieved from duty, and should meet Jack and the other honourable members of the Edinburgh Cock-Fighting Club.

In this frame of mind, and thus situated, was Mr John Cauldwell's friend, when Mr John Cauldwell made his appearance, in the woful plight above alluded to, presenting so dismal and appalling

a figure, that the first impulse of the former was to rise from his seat and fly, for it was not only Mr Cauldwell's clothes that were soiled; his face and hands also were literally black with mud, the former, indeed, so disfigured with it, as scarcely to be recognizable. His friend, however, after gazing at him for a second or two in mute astonishment, did make him out, when leaning forward on his stool, with his hands on his knees, as if he had been inspecting some natural curiosity, he burst into a loud laugh, exclaiming,—

"Jack Cauldwell, love's slave; is this the livery of love you wear? Be these true love's favours with which ye are loaded, and of which ye are so redolent? Say, man, where the devil have you been? Has your angel of light converted you into a demon of darkness? Heaven defend us from sorcery! Had she so much spirit, Eh? Was it she, or some familiar imp that canted you into the slough of despond, in which you seem to have been wallowing?"

Jack Cauldwell, who did not seem to relish the jokes of his friend, cut him short with, "Pshaw, man, no more of this gammon. Let's have a basin of water, a towel, and soap. I have been insulted, waylaid, beset; but I'll be revenged; I'll repay it. He shall feel my vengeance."

"Oh, ho! is there a *He* in the case," asked the black-whiskered gentleman; "Then the girl must have friends,—a sweetheart, I presume,—some lover in humble life,—a hero in his way. Ah, ha, Jack! no chance with a heavy-fisted mechanic. Strong fellows, Jack, heave heavy hammers, beat cock-fighting to sticks."

"I shall beat him to sticks, to smash, to jelly, some day or other," said Jack; "and she also shall feel my vengeance. The Cauldwells don't easily forget an injury; I'm of the pure blood."

"I'll be sworn you are, Jack," replied his friend; no more spirited animal ever faced another. Steel heels your favourite weapons; strike deep and smoothly."

"So I shall," rejoined Jack; "wear steel heels and strike deep and smoothly. I shall have the girl, and banish her lover. My old uncle at the Dean, with whom I have not been on very good terms for some time, must be managed. I shall call on him one of these days; make lots of protestations—tip him the gammon. He knows all the ins and outs about that vile hole the Water of Leith. He'll likely know something of this miller; I shall sponge him about the girl's uncle, and if she's rich enough, I shall marry her—to punish her—to slight her—to——"

"Hand her over to me: let me finish the sentence for you," said Blackbeard. "Ah, you are a rum one; you see I know what's in you. Well, this seems a plausible sort of project, and must be gone through

vigorously; meantime, be quick, dry and brush away. My reliever will be here presently, and let's see if we can't manage to get you in decent order for dinner; the club would have missed you sadly."

At this moment, Philip Lauder, for such was the name of Martha's deliverer, arrived at the post-office, and, tapping at the little wicket, enquired for Widow Forrester's letter. The black-whiskered gentleman stared at him steadily for a second, scanned him from head to foot, closed the wicket, interchanged two or three words with Cauldwell inside, and then re-opening the window, asked, in a merry tone, for which widow's letter he enquired, "Was it a Widow Black's, Sir, or a Widow Brown's, Eh?"

"Widow Forrester," answered Philip.

Here the black-whiskered gentleman closed his eyes, and tapped his forehead with the forefinger of his right hand, as if making an effort of memory. Then, with the appearance of suddenly recollecting all about it,—"Oh, ay, Widow Forrester; yes, yes. That letter, Sir, having remained here so long unclaimed, has been returned to the person who sent it."

"That is impossible," said Philip; "half an hour ago that letter was seen here by the Widow's daughter."

"Ah, but mails, my dear Sir," said the fellow, with an air of mock civility, "don't wait half-hours on widows, nor widows' daughters, nor on widows' sons-in-law; and," continued he, with a peculiar grin on his countenance, "the letter's gone;" and with another grin he slammed-to the wicket.

The first impulse of Philip Lauder, who was, as has been already shewn, possessed of no small share of nerve and vigour, was to push the wicket open with one hand, and dash the other full in the face of the insolent official. He felt his heart swelling within his bosom, and the blood careering wildly through his veins; but his prudence enabled him to restrain his passion. He thought that, however well merited the castigation, such exhibitions were at all times unseemly; and, moreover, he knew that the circumstance of assaulting an official person at his post might be ascribed, in the present case, to other motives than the real one. He might, he thought, even be accused of attempting to rob. His own name might be blasted, and that of the family on whose behalf he was there might thus be connected with unpleasant associations. He tapped again, however, at the wicket, but received no answer. He heard, indeed, a suppressed titter within, and forgetting his better resolution for an instant, he involuntarily clenched his fist, and knit his brows. Again, however, his natural prudence came timeously to his aid, and he left the office, but not without a feeling of anger and disappointment.

On Lauder's return, Martha and her mother were waiting to accompany him up stairs to Mrs Muckle's, and it was with a countenance deeply impressed with the disappointment he felt, that he intimated to Mrs Forrester the unsuccessful result of his mission. The communication had its natural effect on the widow, namely, that of increasing her anxiety and curiosity regarding the letter. She, indeed, made an effort to appear indifferent, but it was evident that she was only attempting to conceal the real state of her feelings; exclamations of disappointment, which she could not suppress, fully betraying her uneasiness.

The whole sisterhood assembled in Mrs Muckle's apartment on that evening, to testify their joy at Martha's deliverance, and to do honour to her deliverer. Each and all of the old ladies contributed something to the tea-table, and the result was such a display of good cheer as a Scottish tea-table alone could exhibit. One brought a papered and labelled pot of currant jelly; another a cannister of choice green tea which her grand nephew had brought her home from China; another contributed a roll of rich stubble butter, which some farmer relation had sent her; and so loaded was the table with these and other dainties, that Mrs Muckle's old fashioned cups and saucers, with her curiously inlaid antique tray, were altogether lost amid the huge accumulation. It is unnecessary to state how long this primitive tea-party sat on the eventful night in question, nor to descant on the magniloquence of the ancient sisterhood on the extraordinary occurrences of the evening;—how they abused the villain who had assaulted Martha, and ascribed to him every bad motive associated in their mind with dark nights and dark closes;—how the circumstance brought out numerous long dismal stories about cruel doings that had gone on in that same neighbourhood in other years. Then would the heroism of Martha's young deliverer be talked of in glowing terms;—then would Martha's worth and beauty form the subject of another half hour's eulogium, till the two young people, who had little to say, scarcely knew which way to look to conceal their agitation.

The old ladies were enraptured with the affair altogether. It was so exciting, so novel, so delightful, to have amongst them the hero and the heroine of a romantic adventure, that they determined on enjoying themselves, and there being a gentleman present, on having a little stimulant, in the shape of a bowl of punch, brewed by his hands. Accordingly, Mrs Muckle's punch-bowl, once her father's, with a fish painted on the bottom, and above it the motto, "Keep me swiming," was placed on the table. The fish was quickly set afloat, and although the young man had never before acted as punch brewer and chairman to such a company, he discharged his duties so well, as to gain golden opinions

from all his fair constituents. By and bye the old ladies got merry, and insisted on the hero of the night favouring them with a song; and thus entreated, the young man set off with

THE WIDOW.

The widow is feckless, the widow's alane,
Yet no ane e'er hears the puir widow complain;
For, ah! there's a friend that the warld wots nae o',
Wha brightens her ken, and wha lightens her wo.

She looks a' around her, an' what sees she there,
But quarrels and cavils, but sorrow an' care;
She looks in within, and she feels in her breast
A dawning o' glory, a foretaste o' rest.

The hope o' hereafter her lone bosom cheers—
She longs sair to meet him wha left her in tears;
And life's flickering light, as it wanes fast awa,
But fades to gie place to a far brighter daw.

The God of high heaven is her comfort and guide—
When earthly friends leave her, He stands by her side;
He soothes a' her sorrows, an' hushes her fears,
An' fountains o' joy rise frae well-springs o' tears.

Then, O! show the widow the smile on your face;
She's aft puir in gear, but she's aye rich in grace:
Be kind to the widow, her Friend is on high,
You'll meet wi' the widow again in the sky.

There were other parties than the old ladies affected, and affected deeply, by that night's adventure. There were on that night two hearts bound together by ties that death alone could sever. Two young persons, who had hitherto known only the affection which pure and generous hearts feel for the whole human family, were now destined to feel the still more elevating and more ennobling sentiment of love—pure, holy, first love.

Humble, indeed, was the sphere of life in which providence had placed Martha Forrester and Philip Lauder, yet superior talent, high principle, and fine feeling will be found as often dwelling with the lowly as with the elevated. Deeds have been done by a peasant's arm which have won the admiration of the world; aye, and with all

due deference to the bards, who have generally been considered the accredited chroniclers of true love's history, and have too frequently selected their heroes and heroines from high life, as if there alone were to be found the purest and most elevating records of the young heart's affections. I, in my own proper person and character of Gaberlunzie, hereby enter my protest against such practice, as inconsistent with truth, hurtful in its moral tendency, and degrading to human nature. All my experience has shewn me, that if there be purer affection existing among one class than another, it is to be found in the humble walks of life. Noble minds will always assert their dignity some time or other. Mind educates itself. The native flowers of a country bloom brightly even amid the wildness of uncultivated nature. Intuition is an essential frequently lost sight of in our schools;—is it not that portion of our knowledge we have direct from heaven?

In the case of Philip Lauder, as in that of Martha Forrester, nature had done more than art. He was an active, intelligent, young man, who had gained the approbation and secured the esteem of his employer by his various good qualities; and he entertained the laudable ambition of raising himself, by the legitimate means of steady and earnest application, above the station in which early circumstances had placed him. With these views he redoubled his exertions, spending his nights in reading, in thinking, and in every method of self-improvement. As might be expected, his progress was rapid; and he was now about to enter into business on his own account. The young man's deportment was manly though modest, and his conversation at once enlightened and agreeable. It was thus that Martha Forrester felt, on retiring to rest for that evening, that she had for the first time met with one in her own rank of life with whom she could be happy. All the young men who had formerly attempted to gain her favour, were either her superiors in rank, or infinitely beneath her in intellectual acquirements; and young as Martha was at the time, I am not sure that she had not in musing over the matter, quietly set herself down as one who would eventually figure in the corps of old maidens.

CHAPTER V.

Fowls of a feather
Ay flock together.
Old Proverb.

THE course of our narrative now renders it necessary that we should accompany Mr John Cauldwell and his friend to the place where the members of the Edinburgh Cockfighting Club were to dine together. Although not quite so smart as could have been wished, Jack had, with the assistance of his friend, succeeded wonderfully in restoring his soiled and deranged habiliments to comparative order and decency; so that, although pale and shivering a little, in consequence of the thorough soaking he had undergone, Jack took his place at table with considerable eclat; nay, after having whipped off a glass of spirits by way of an appetizer, he really looked quite slap-up, and apparently began to feel perfectly at ease.

The Edinburgh Cockfighting Club patronized a certain publican residing in one of the High Street closes, who was himself noted for his skill in the science, and it was in the house of this worthy that the club were to dine. The "club-room," as the room appropriated to the use of the fraternity, was called *par excellence*, was a long, low-roofed apartment, whose walls were covered with portraits of celebrated cocks, who, by their heroic deeds, had proved themselves worthy of living in the memories of this intellectual association. The pictures of two race horses, all legs, and of two bull dogs, all head, also graced the walls; but these last were only small engravings, enclosed in narrow black frames, while the champions of the cock-pit were painted as large as life, with brilliant plumage, and strutting in attitudes of lofty and daring defiance. Large roosters were there, with close cropped combs, steel-shod heels, and tall tapering limbs; and there, too, were little bantams, overwhelmed with feathers, and appearing so old and vener-

able, that you marvelled how such antediluvian looking creatures could ever come up to time in a field of battle.

The laws of the Cockfighting Club limited the number of members to sixteen, and the latter asserted that it required considerable influence to gain admission to the corps. It was secretly whispered, however, and the circumstance is creditable to the city, that they never were able, with all their beating up, to keep the association up to its full number. Be this as it may, the members present at dinner on this occasion amounted to twelve, the landlord himself making the devil's dozen, and that old gentleman never had the pleasure of seeing a dozen of more faithful servants assembled together.

The chairman and croupier were both huge, gross, over-fed looking men, butchers apparently, to judge by their manner and style of conversation. The chairman was supported on the right by Mr John Cauldwell, and, on the left, by Mr Cauldwell's friend, the gentleman of the black whiskers. The croupier, again, was supported on the right by a long, thin, pimple-faced man, with a red nose, and long black hair, straggling down his back. This person had a bald forehead, which, although in reality small and receding, looked in its nakedness sufficiently imposing. This gentleman was artist to the club, and it was his faithful pencil which had pourtrayed the heroes of the feathered race with which the walls of the apartment were adorned. He had also painted the portraits of both chairman and croupier, and generally dined every day with some one or other of the members of the club. The poor artist never had a stiver in his pocket—the club paid his shot—the club protected and patronized him—and if an indiscriminating world did neglect him, and refuse to purchase his pictures, why he could console himself with the reflection, that the distinguished honour was his of being Historical and Portrait Painter to the Edinburgh Cockfighting Club. Miserable support—infamous patronage. God pity the poor, needy, starving artist, who drags out a weary life under such auspices.

Of all the other persons present on this occasion, there was but one more worthy of any special notice. This was a lean, wiry man, with a keen clear eye, who looked an impersonation of the shadow of death, and whose presence threw a chill on all around him. There was a rattle in his spectre throat, and his laugh was hollow and sardonic. He was restless and fidgetty, ever looking around him for some new cause of excitement, and prepared to dispute every word that was uttered. "What will you bet," "will you hold me," was perpetually on his lips. He was a veteran cockfighter, a hoary gambler.

The club had dined, the cloth was removed, and the enormous punch-bowl had been filled to the brim. Surely the bliss of the company was

complete? Not at all, there was evidently something awanting still. The lean, fidgetty man, was now more restless and fidgetty than ever. The chairman threw himself back in his chair, breathed hard, gulped up a brimmer, and looked to the ceiling. The croupier, who was really a jolly fellow, after a vain attempt to get up a bumper toast, gave it up, and began to beat time with his heels to a slow tune, which he unconsciously hummed to himself. It was clear, in short, that there was an event impending, probably another fight to come off, and this was the case, as shortly appeared. The lean fidgetty man, unable longer to endure the delay which all felt, exclaimed in a querulous voice, "What the devil keeps the fellow with the bantams? He has surely forgotten his appointment."

"Gie him time, nae fear o' him forgettin, gie him time, man," said the landlord. "I thought I saw him in the close twa three minutes ago. Ye ken he doesna like to disturb ye during dinner, an' he'll likely be gettin' a dram frae some o' the poultry folk for a sight o' the twa beauties. They'll aiblins try their mettle afore they come here. He's a queer birkie, Jock;" and, as if answering to his name, our friend, Coal Jock, presented himself in the room, and desiring the landlord to clear the table, drew forth from two small bags a pair of feathery pugnacious bantams;—

"There they are," said Jock, first putting one bird, and then another, down on the smooth mahogany table; "there they are, and twa gamer wee beauties ne'er clawed ithers kames. They'll soon tak the polish out o' your mahogany, landlord, I'll warrant ye. Clear awa there an' let them see ilk ither. Twa mair spirited bits o' burdies I ha'ena seen for seven year o' Sundays."

The poor animals looked around them in alarm. They were fluttered with the glare of light. Anon the instinct of their natures prevailing, they stopped short, and began to lower their heads; signs of approaching hostilities. Bets were now offered and taken in all quarters. The birds strutted, crowed, stretched their necks, and finally went to work in gallant style, striking out with their heels, and flapping with their wings with pugnacious vigour. Now the one flew at the other. Again, though oft missing their footing on the clear mahogany table, they came full tilt against each other with well directed aim. Now they were at the one end of the board, then at the other, while the brutal onlookers sat with arms crossed on the table, absolutely entranced with delight. The lean fidgetty man offered bets to every body around him. Cauldwell and his friend rubbed their hands in an ecstasy of joy. In the midst of the general rapture, one of the birds struck its spur through the other's head, when the poor little feathered warrior fell down stone dead. And how were the spectators affected by the death they had

witnessed? Something to think of, although it was but the death of a bantam. Why, they all demanded and paid their bets. The punch-bowl was again placed on the table. The victor bird was declared a rare one; and the only sign of pity evinced for the poor dead bird was exhibited by Jock, who, in putting the body into the bag, exclaimed, "Puir wee Jock (for our Nelly ca'ed him after me), I ne'er thought ye wad hae been sae soon streekit. Our wife, Nelly, will hae a sair missin' o' her wee bantam Jockie."

Jock was an especial favourite with the members of the cockfighting club. Gilmerton, his present place of residence, was famed for cock-fighting and cock-rearing, and Jock was thus frequently employed to select and make purchases for the club. Following the example set in higher quarters, Jock was on the most familiar footing with his patrons, and was always made welcome to sit down and enjoy himself along with them. On the present occasion, however, he was about to hurry away, after swallowing a single glass of the "raw," when the croupier called out to him—

"Hey, Jock, what's taking you away so soon? Sit ye still, man, and take your toothfu'."

"I canna stay ony langer e'enow," replied Jock. "I'm on the outlook for a puir widow an' her daughter, o' the name o' Forrester, frae the Water o' Leith, that my auld master, Halbert Flemyng, wants to find out. Her gudeman's foster brither has come hame wi' walth o' siller to her, an' she needs it, atweel."

Here Cauldwell and his companion looked hard at each other, and the former asked Jock, "And can't ye find these good folks out? There should be little difficulty in that, I should think."

"'Od, I wish ye wad help me then, Mr Cauldwell," said Jock; "it might be worth your while. The lassie is unco bonny. Your uncle at the Dean-house is gettin' auld, and will nae doubt be anxious about the widow and her daughter. They ance stayed in a cottage belanging to him. He might maybe let ye marry the lassie, now that she is to hae a tocher, an' gie ye Dean-house to stay in. My certie, ye wad be able to keep walth o' fightin' cocks then. Ye might maybe mak me your man, and our Nelly your housewife.

Cauldwell listened to John's speech intently, and although he had on that very night grossly insulted the girl, he now determined on doing all in his power to establish himself in her good graces. For this purpose however, it was necessary that, in the meantime, all knowledge of her good fortune should be kept from her; succeeding in this, he could, with more appearance of sincerity, profess humility for past errors, and offer his assistance as a friend. This resolution formed, and it was quickly done, he began to fear that Coal Jock might know her

place of abode, but he was delighted to learn from that worthy that he had only a vague idea of her residing somewhere about the Canongate.

Cauldwell, amused by Jock's simplicity, said, and the club agreed with him, that this pretended uncle was hoaxing the miller. He also volunteered his services in endeavouring to find out the widow by inquiring about her at his friends the Canongate baillies, who knew all the poor people in the district, and finally prevailed on honest John to sit still for an hour or two longer. At the expiry of this time, the besotted company, each of whom drank as if for a wager, began to break up, staggering away one after the other, leaving Cauldwell and his black-whiskered friend with their heads reclining on the table in a state of brutal intoxication.

It was morning when poor old Maillie, with a flickering lamp in her hand, quietly opened the front door of Mr Cauldwell's house, and as quietly preceded and conducted Mr John Cauldwell to his sleeping apartment in the upper part of the house. In the condition in which Mr John Cauldwell was, it cost him no little trouble to attain the required altitude. But a dread of his father's displeasure urged him to exertion, and contributed to the ultimate success of his efforts. Old Cauldwell was exceedingly strict and rigid in his family regulations and requirements, and "Gay Jack," as his black-whiskered friend called him, was continually in terror lest his gaiety should be found out. He was thus always on the alert, and managed, by dint of hypocrisy and impudence, aided by his mother's connivance, to lull the suspicions of his austere and upright father.

When Mr John Cauldwell awoke on the following morning, he found that the breakfast hour had arrived, but that he was in no trim, after the delightful evening he had spent, for enjoying that meal. Indeed, like all who spend such delightful evenings, he was in a most deplorable condition. Anxious, however, to keep up appearances, he plunged his head into cold water, washed and dressed, and presented himself at the breakfast table with a tolerably decent exterior, although a penetrating and discerning eye might have readily enough perceived that all was not right.

"Come away, Sir," said his father, on his entering the parlour, "always late. Breakfast waiting ten minutes behind time. I ought to have been at the Parliament House three minutes since. This comes of keeping late hours at night. Are you kept late at the office, Sir; Eh?"

"Yes, Sir, very late," replied Mr Cauldwell junior, with cool effrontery, stretching his arms out, and yawning tremendously; "in fact, the mails have been so irregular of late, that we are kept till all the hours of the night. I could have slept two hours yet."

"And might have done so," growled the senior Mr Cauldwell, "for all the use you seem to make of your waking hours. You don't seem to be advancing a bit in the office. How's that? No word of an increase of salary; you ought to have been much further up the ladder by this time."

"Ladder!" exclaimed the junior Mr Cauldwell. "In faith, Sir, I am so hard worked and ill-timed in that office that I will soon be unfit to walk, let alone to climb. I have neither rest nor pleasure, and am falling away to nothing. I am in fact becoming a living skeleton."

"So you are, so you are," exclaimed Mrs Cauldwell, sympathizingly, as she poured out a cup of the strongest tea for her darling, intending to fill up with water for the others. "So you are, my dear boy; you eat nothing, you drink nothing. There, dear, there is a cup of strong tea; it will do you good, poor fellow, you do look so ill. Don't chide him, I beg, Mr Cauldwell, he can't stand it. He has hardships enough to endure out of doors, we must make him comfortable within."

"Certainly, certainly, my dear," interrupted her loving husband; "I do not mean to chide him, but merely to condemn the system that keeps young men so late out at night."

"Indeed," replied Mrs Cauldwell, "I think you might easily manage to get an alteration made, and to put a stop to these mails coming galloping through the streets at midnight like unchancy things, their torches gleaming like warlock's eyes, frightening *douce* folks in their beds, and keeping others waiting to such unreasonable hours. I declare it is a disgrace to the town."

"Ay, and depriving us of our dear brother's society," chimed in Miss Jane, as she passed the toast to Mr Cauldwell junior, with a kind and brotherly smile. "It is too bad, papa; John never can get home in time, poor fellow, to take us to see a sight, like the brothers of other young ladies of our acquaintance."

"I have not been to a ball this year," exclaimed Miss Maria, "and that solely because John couldn't go, papa; not likely that young ladies should go alone to such entertainments."

"Always hankering after these vain and silly frivolities," said their father; "ye do not so hunger and thirst after a sermon, trifling creatures."

"Poor dear things," said the young ladies' mother, "don't talk so harshly to them. You know, my dear Mr Cauldwell, their minds are refined, and their tastes highly cultivated. It is but natural that at their time of life, they should be anxious to see a little of the gay world. Recollect you were once young yourself, my dear."

At this moment, a thundering double flourish of the knocker was heard, and in the next instant the postman was ushered into the par-

lour. He was a long thin man, with a pair of very long legs, and a head so much inclined forward, that in entering a room, the head was visible long before the entire body to which the said head belonged came into sight. This official gentleman seemed to be on a familiar footing with all the members of the family excepting the *head of the house* himself, to whom he inclined his head but slightly. Then laying down some letters, "Any thing for post this morning, Sir?" he said. Then turning round to the junior Mr Cauldwell, he pitched down unceremoniously a packet addressed J. C. Post-Office, saying, "For you, Sir, I suppose; came yesterday afternoon after you left."

"Left in the afternoon!" said Mr Cauldwell, turning to his son. "I thought, Sir, you had been detained at the office until the late, or rather early, hour at which you came home. Is not my son, Sir," he continued, turning to the postman, "the last person who leaves the office? Does he not lock and seal up? Is he not last on duty?"

"Yes, Sir, generally," replied the postman; "but last night he dined abroad, I believe, and did not come to the office after dinner." Then, giving the young Mr Cauldwell a broad full look, he turned toward the door, and stalked out of the apartment.

"How's this, Sir?" exclaimed Mr Cauldwell, in a tone of voice so stern, so different from that in which he usually spoke, as caused the different members of his family present to start in alarm; "How's this, Sir?" he repeated, in a deeper but more subdued tone, "You came home here at three in the morning, and told me a little while ago that you were kept waiting on a late mail. Now, Sir, it appears that you were not in the office after dinner. This is your hurried snatch of a penny loaf and a bottle of small beer. This is being chained to the bar, as you call it. This is the hard labour that has destroyed your appetite, and reduced you to a living skeleton—very pretty, indeed."

"Father," exclaimed Jack, interrupting his worthy parent's lecture, "listen to me if you please. The fellow was talking nonsense when he said I was out at dinner yesterday. The fact is, he saw me go out to snatch, as you say, my morsel of bread and cheese with my neighbour of the office, and he has magnified this into a regular blow-up. I am loath to hurt any man's character, and would not deprive a man of his bread without good cause. But the truth is, my dear father, that long-necked fellow gets himself drunk every afternoon, and renders himself unfit for his work, and it is this that makes the duties of my office so much heavier than they ought to be. The fellow's business is to assist me in assorting the letters, but last night he was so intoxicated that I had to do the whole myself, and it was that kept me so late, and reduced me to such a state of exhaustion that I was scarcely able to drag one leg after another. Ask old Maillie."

"Liar, base, deceitful liar," shouted Mr Cauldwell, in violent passion; "Oh! that ever I should have cause so to call a son of mine. Why will you add to your offence the sin of falsehood? Here," said he, snatching the packet from his son's hands, "is the Post-Office stamp of yesterday five o'clock noon, yet you say you sorted the letters at that hour. If so, how came this packet to escape you? It could not, it is impossible; you have, therefore, told a monstrous and deliberate lie, with the intention of deceiving me, and you shall be treated, young man, in the way precisely which such conduct merits. But what's this? What's this?" he continued, "the packet is for me, not for you. Another applicant, I dare say, for the governess's situation;" and he proceeded to break the seal of Martha Forrester's application.

John Cauldwell could offer no defence to the charge of falsehood so clearly established against him, but sat silent, though in no way abashed, watching his father as he read the now unfolded letter, thinking how he could effect a decent retreat from the presence of his angry parent.

I have said that the letter which Mr Cauldwell senior had just opened was an application from Martha Forrester, of course written in ignorance of the party advertising. This party was the Cauldwells, who, after being baulked in every attempt to get a governess to their mind, had adopted the expedient of advertising, and it was this advertisement that had created such a sensation in Hammermen's Close, and had been the cause of the old ladies there exerting themselves so much to procure testimonials for Martha. These testimonials Mr John Cauldwell eyed with some interest, as they tumbled one after another out of the packet, thinking that the discussion of their merits would divert his father's anger from him, and that he might thus escape without farther rebuke. It was with no little alarm, however, that he saw his father's brow become darker and darker, and saw the usually bland lawyer, who opened and folded papers so carefully and so neatly, toss the whole bundle angrily down on the table, exclaiming, "Impertinent, ungrateful minx, how does she dare."

"Who? What, father?" shouted both young ladies at once. Who do you speak of?"

"Pho! that I should allow such a trifling matter to ruffle my temper," said the philosophic Mr Cauldwell, resuming his usual mild tone; "yet, my dears," he continued, addressing his daughters, "is it not provoking to find, in an applicant for the situation of your governess, the very identical person who was so deservedly discharged from our service lately? The vain, showy Martha Forrester, backed by a host of trumpery, and, I have no doubt, got up testimonials."

"Martha Forrester!" exclaimed mother and daughters in a breath, and in a tone of mingled surprise and contempt. "Well—that does

beat impudence itself," said the former. But who shall paint the astonishment, the disgust of the Cauldwells at the audacity of Martha Forrester presuming to come forward as a candidate for such a situation as they had advertised. "She a travelling companion for young ladies?" and, "Did ever mortal see impertinence so backed, such testimonials! Well, after that, a stone-breaker may apply for employment as a lapidary, a paver as a diamond setter."

In the meantime Mr John Cauldwell junior, who, as already stated, had been watching for an opportunity to escape from his present unpleasant situation, now began to have a clear view of a course which he thought it would be very desirable to pursue. He remembered Flemyng's letter, and Coal Jock's statement anent Martha's prospects. He thought on the many attempts which his loving sisters had made to damage him in his rich uncle's estimation, and now resolved to pay them back in their own coin. If, as Coal Jock had stated, old Deanhouse was likely to take an interest in Martha's welfare; and if, as Miller Flemyng's letter stated, she had a wealthy uncle, who was disposed to befriend her, what a glorious prospect was here opened up to the adventurous spirit of Mr John Cauldwell. A matrimonial spec of the first water. Bags of yellow gold, Deanhouse, nay, the Dean itself with its delightful pleasure-grounds—all these were, in imagination, within his grasp. Moreover, the prospect was now opened up to him of freeing himself from the trammels of parental authority. He would now also, so ran the current of his thoughts, secure his uncle's countenance by professing to take the part of poor Martha Forrester, while ignorant of the good fortune that awaited her. Thus would he obtain credit for disinterested kindness, not only with his uncle and others, but with Martha herself, whose gentle nature he knew would be touched by such generosity. Having formed these plans, the young gentleman thus expressed his opinions on the matter.

"Well, for my part, really I do not see that you can do better than take Martha Forrester back into your employment. I am sure my beloved sisters reaped great advantages from her instruction formerly, and why should the poor girl not be engaged again? She did nothing to merit reproach. If she was more beautiful and more accomplished than her pupils, they had wealth and station on their side, and ought to have been contented with these advantages."

Mr John's speech rather surprised his auditory, of whom his mother was the first to reply. With her usual penetration, she had, as she thought, at once detected her son's motives for thus advocating the cause of Martha Forrester.

"Come, come, John," she said, "you must not think to deceive me. I see it all. That sly huzzy has entangled you, you poor simple boy.

She is deep, but I know her. Did she think that I would not at once perceive that it was you who had advised her to apply for the situation? And were you silly enough to believe that my suspicions would be lulled by causing your subordinate to bring the letter up in the morning, instead of bringing it home yourself? Pleading in her favour, too; I have no doubt, she and you were together till the hour you came home this morning."

"Your suspicions are as unfounded as they are unfair, mother," said Jack. "Martha Forrester is as virtuous as she is amiable and accomplished, and it is for these reasons I speak in her behalf."

"Say no more," exclaimed Mrs Cauldwell, now in a violent passion. "Amiable and accomplished, indeed! Amiable and accomplished fiddlesticks! She seems to have bewitched you at any rate, you poor simpleton." Then turning to her husband, "Don't you see it, Mr Cauldwell, clear as noon-day? A combination between your thoughtless son here and that artful huzzy. Oh! I could trample her beneath my feet, and beat her brazen face black and blue."

"Shame! mother, shame!" replied Jack coolly, "be not so abusive. Suppose, now, I really did love Martha Forrester, is there any harm in entertaining such a sentiment for a beautiful girl, who happens, from causes over which she has no controul, to be in poverty. You have used her ill, I tell you plainly. She was too good for you; and although you blame me, I consider it but acting a friendly part towards you, when I suggest that you should again avail yourself of her services."

"Go on, go on, John," said Mrs Cauldwell, swinging her little squat person backwards and forwards, and wringing her hands in a state of great excitement, "Go on, I see it all; Martha Forrester would never have had the audacity to send a letter here, unless she had been assured that you were to support her application."

"You forget, mother," answered Jack, "that she could not possibly know you were the person who had advertised for the governess. Initials only were given, and initials are but blind guides."

"Not so blind, brother John," broke in Miss Maria. "Here, now, is an M. F. on this sleeve ruffle," producing the article named, "which you drew from your pocket along with your handkerchief. Now, I should say, that this M. F. stands for Martha Forrester; and I should infer that you were with that young lady last night."

Here was a most unexpected and overwhelming piece of evidence against Jack, clearly establishing the accuracy of his sister's inference. The sleeve ruffle was indeed Martha's. Jack, when knocked down by Lauder, had rent it from Martha's arm; and, in the hurry and confusion of the moment, had unconsciously thrust it into his pocket. Albeit,

FAMILY DISCORD

not much given to blushing, Jack certainly did blush a little on this occasion, and was endeavouring to make some reply, including a denial of the charge brought against him, when his father, who had hitherto been a silent spectator of all that was passing, interrupted him, saying, "You are a foolish young man, John, exceedingly foolish, and, moreover, sadly deficient in talent. I found that you were not qualified to rise in my own profession, and I obtained a government situation for you, where you had an opportunity of pushing yourself forward. Now, I find, that instead of availing yourself of that opportunity by the exercise of a due diligence, and by attention to your duties, you are idling away your time with a girl in the very lowest rank of life. I know well what it is to marry a fortuneless wife, and to struggle on with a young family with inadequate means. You must be aware, that notwithstanding all my exertions, I am barely able to meet the demands of my creditors. Let me counsel you, therefore, to avoid this girl in future; and, allow me further to add, that if you do not, I shall at once expel you from my house, and leave you to shift for yourself."

On hearing this dreadful denunciation, which, however, they thought perfectly just, the Misses Cauldwell and their worthy mother broke out into loud sobs, murmuring, while tears filled their eyes—"Deceitful Martha; poor, dear, foolish brother."

Their poor, dear, foolish brother, however, was not to be moved by such exhibitions of tenderness. Instead of taking part in the performance, he clapped his hat on his head, pulled kid gloves from his pocket, drew them on, and giving his hat a knowing cock to one side, exclaimed, in a heroic tone, "I go Sir, from under your inhospitable roof, never to return. For Martha Forrester I will not resign, never will forget."

"Go, then," said old Cauldwell passionately, and holding his fist aloft, "go, and the curse of a father go with you;" and he sunk back in his chair, exhausted by the violence of his emotion.

There was one witness to this scene, who did not hear Jack's avowal of attachment to Martha Forrester without pleasure. This was old Maillie, who, in ignorance of Jack's schemes, believed in the sincerity and disinterestedness of his passion; and, so believing, she now ran after him, and strove to hold him by the skirts of his coat, beseeching him, with tears in her eyes, to do nothing rashly. She then shook him cordially by the hand, and entreated him to continue to love and adore Martha, whose hand she assured him he would yet obtain. "She is worth a thousand of the ladies to whom your father would have you married," continued poor unsuspecting Maillie. "Be firm and resolute, and all will yet be well. Gae tell the story to your uncle. I will see him

soon, and let him ken how nobly ye hae ta'en the orphan's part. He's sure to like ye for't. He's aye been sorry for turnin' her mother out o' her dwellin', and I'll warrant ye wad fain mak her amends. Gang awa to him an' a' will be right."

While Maillie thus addressed Jack, he turned round, and, looking in her face with a woful countenance, exclaimed,—

"Alas! alas! what have I done that I am doomed to be sacrificed to the sordid selfishness of my family. Was it not enough that poor Martha, she on whom I had placed my affections, should have been turned away from her situation, in consequence of the envy of my sisters, but her poor mother must also suffer from the rapacity of my miserly uncle; while I, heaven help me! am also banished from my father's house for taking the part of the widow and the fatherless. When did my uncle eject Widow Forrester, and under what circumstances? Tell me, Maillie?"

"Alack," replied Maillie, "under circumstances, an' at a time that ye wad hae thocht might hae softened the hardest heart. Her husband died after a long and lingering illness. He an' his forbears had occupied the same cottage an' workshop for lang an' mony a day. The honest man was muckle respeckit by the Water o' Leith bodies, and they aften said it was unco harsh in your uncle to turn awa' the widow frae her dwellin'. An' your uncle's been sorry for't, and wad fain do something for her now, I'll warrant ye."

"Never a bit of him, Maillie," exclaimed Jack. "It is not in his nature. He will seek some way to justify himself, even in this merciless measure; and were I to apply to him on the widow's behalf, he would only feel more exasperated at me than ever. Already has his two ears been poisoned against me. He believes me a profligate, and I cannot face him. I am alone, and without a friend in the world," and here Jack's handkerchief was raised to his eyes, and he bowed down his head and wept bitterly.

"Never fear, my young friend," said Maillie; "although I never kenned till now ye had sae warm a heart. I hae gude hopes o' ye now. Gang awa' to your uncle; tell him your story,—it's sure to touch him. There's gude in him for a'; an' ye hae shewn sic an interest in the cause o' the fatherless, that he canna but like ye. But, at ony rate, ye ken, we maun aye try to owercome evil wi' gude; and, gin ye can only manage to regain the gude will o' auld Deanhouse, he maybe may consent to your union wi' bonny sweet Martha Forrester. And, my word," she concluded, giving Jack an encouraging look, "the Dean winna hae had sic a laird and leddy for mony a day," and having said this, Maillie again shook Jack cordially by the hand.

Jack returned the pressure with much apparent warmth of feeling,

and darted off in the direction of his uncle's place of residence, with which, together with its owner, and several other particulars connected with our story, it is now high time the reader was made acquainted.

Deanhouse, the residence of Mr Archibald Cauldwell, stood where it still stands, on an eminence overlooking and immediately adjoining the village of the Water of Leith, the said eminence forming the northern bank of the last bend of the stream, previous to its entering the village. The front of the acclivity is crowned with very ancient trees, and is intersected by little shaded footpaths, turning at acute angles, and forming so many terraces, from which ever and anon you catch glimpses of the surrounding scenery through openings in the trees. Threading the mazes of the wood by these little footpaths, you now descend to the deep green velvet sward that borders the stream, and almost without knowing it, now ascend to the top of the height, whose shaggy surface is covered with wild flowers. The sun-rays chequering through the interleaved and thickly woven foliage of the trees, and falling in golden showers on the bosom of the stream that here steals silently along, adds to the beauty of the scene, which is further enlivened by the melodious warblings of the blackbird and laverock, while the deep-toned cawing of the crows in the rookery high overhead, proves that the wood is of great antiquity. The turrets and towers of Edinburgh Castle loom in the distance. A majestic bridge sweeps across the valley in the middle distance, the houses of the little primitive village are seen peeping here and there through the leafy branches of the sun-lighted trees that overshadow you, and at every turn some beautiful object bursts suddenly on your sight.

Deanhouse is, in so far as I am aware, the only genuine specimen of the old Scottish baronial residence to be seen on the banks of the Water of Leith. The front of the mansion is narrow, but it is flanked on the one side by a long stretch of building containing the principal apartments, and overlooking the wooded eminence above alluded to. The entrance doorway is arched, and, imbedded in the wall above, is a stone having the family arms carved thereon. The windows, though for the most part small, are numerous, those in the upper storey all terminating in angular or curved tops, elaborately carved. Tall chimney heads shoot high above the roof. Small towers project at each of the angular corners; and, when shone upon by the evening sun, these points throw a variety of well defined shadows on the lawn which surrounds the mansion, the rich green colour of the former contrasting well with the antique grey hue of the latter. The windows command a series of extensive and delightful views, that to the north embracing the Firth

of Forth and the hills of Fife, being peculiarly picturesque and beautiful.

Altogether it would not be easy to find a more desirable place of abode than Deanhouse, the residence at the time of our story of Mr Archibald Cauldwell, then the head of the family of that name. Neither would it be easy for the reflective mind to contemplate this venerable mansion now-a-days, without some such feelings as I have attempted to embody in the following verses.

TIME'S CHANGES.

O DAYS long forgotten, why rise ye again,
When all your remembrance brings sorrow and pain?
When she wha's fair picture was 'graved in your heart,
Appears shrunk an' faded, nae ferlie ye start.

When he wha has taught ye, a bairn at the school,
Wha's wise pow aye made ye a poor donner't fool,
Comes seekin' your aid, wi' his head hingin' low,
Oh! sair is the shock, aye, an' hard is the blow.

The whiteheaded elder, whom lang syne ye mind,
Was aye to your puir widowed mother sae kind;
When stricken wi' poortith, an' laden wi' years,
Ye help him, ye bless him, ye gie him your tears.

The wee cockin' bailie ye liket sae weel,
Wha aye was sae mensefu' wi' maut an' wi' meal,
When fastin' has come, and when feastin's awa,
Ye mourn for his fate, an' ye feel for his fa'.

Yon mansion sae hoary, ye mind a laird's ha',
Now lane an' deserted, is crumbling awa';
Ye think on the days the auld biggin' has seen,
An' thoughts of the past bring the tears to your e'en.

Thus Time shows us a' what maun soon come to pass,
We're backward to keek in his truth-telling glass;
New buds may sprout out frae the auld hoary tree,
But e'en these young buds soon maun wither an' dee.

Yet, though your frail body maun mingle wi' clay,
Sweet virtue bears flowers that can never decay;
An' Oh! gin ye've grafted ae bud on her tree,
You'll see your ain flower blooming brightly on hie.

Mr Archibald Cauldwell, besides being proprietor of Deanhouse and the adjoining estate, owned a number of houses in the village, including the far-famed Waldie's smithy. Deanhouse standing so near the village, and being then the only mansion of note in the neighbourhood, its proprietor was naturally looked up to by the villagers, although he had very little of either their respect or esteem, for he was, at bottom, a selfish and niggardly man, and, notwithstanding all his liberal professions, meanness formed the groundwork of his character, and governed all his actions. It was whispered amongst a few of the old people who had known him in his youth, that, at one time, he had been a gambler and a rake, and had mortgaged a considerable portion of his estate. He had now, however, and for a long time previous, abandoned these practices, and had become a regular, sedate, staid country gentleman, although the love of gain, which had made him a gambler, now converted him into a miser, and he screwed, and pinched, and overreached, wherever opportunity offered, in order to make up the deficiencies occasioned by his early indiscretions. All the tradesmen whom he employed he paid at the lowest possible rates. Every job he required executed, he put up to keen competition, and thus, it not unfrequently happened, that the successful competitor lost, instead of gaining, by his patronage. Another practice of this worthy gentleman was to patronize young beginners in trade, ostensibly to help them on in the world, but, in reality, to serve his own interest, for he found he could get them to work much cheaper than older hands; young men, he well knew, readily making sacrifices to obtain the patronage of men whom they deemed of weight and influence.

Mr Cauldwell also enjoyed the credit of having assisted several persons to climb the hill of life; but these were, in every instance, men who were already rapidly making their way upwards, and who would have got on very well without his support. The poor fellow whom misfortune had laid prostrate on the earth, might lie there long enough before Mr Cauldwell would stretch out a hand to raise him.

Notwithstanding his meanness and selfishness, the laird of Deanhouse was looked upon by the villagers as a man of power and might, and his opinion was bowed to on most occasions by the simple and unsophisticated community, over which he may be said to have presided. The laird, as he was emphatically styled, unavoidably spent considerable sums of money among them, and his tenants, of whom,

as already mentioned, he had a good many in the village, generally paid their rents in work, although he always took care to have double value in all such cases. Few of the poor tradesmen kept books, trusting their scores to memory, a practice which, it was said, "the laird" used to turn to good account.

Another characteristic of this worthy gentlemen deserves notice. He entertained a high idea of his own importance, and talked of himself and the family he represented with great self-complacency. In temper, he was stubborn, had a quarrelsome disposition, and was always at variance with some one or other. He never forgot or forgave a real or supposed injury, and no human eloquence could persuade him that any thing which had offended him had not been done on purpose for his annoyance. No apology could avert his indignation, no expressions of regret allay his wrath. Every offence was, in his estimation, the result of a deep and treacherous design against him. Thus was he more feared than honoured—his wealth, not his worth, giving him all the influence he possessed over the simple-minded villagers.

The only tenant on Mr Cauldwell's property who feared him not, cared nothing for his anger, and at all times told him precisely what he thought of him and his doings, was our friend Mathew Waldie; and, strange enough, "the laird," contrary to his usual manner and disposition, never appeared to take any thing amiss that Mathew said, however unpalatable it might be, his only remarks on such occasions being, that "Mathew's bark was weel kenn'd to be waur than his bite," or "Mathew's tongue was nae scandal."

Old Draw-well, as Waldie called the laird, used generally, in his perambulations through the village, to pop into Waldie's smithy. He was a great newsmonger, was always on the hunt for gossip and scandal of every description, and the smith's shop being the repository for all the occurrences of the day, was one of his favourite resorts. On such occasions, he either sponged Mathew's men, their master being in the public house in the way of business, as elsewhere stated, or waited to have a confab with the smith himself.

It happened that old Cauldwell came down to the village on the forenoon of the day succeeding that on which the miller, smith, and tailor, had been on their mission to Edinburgh, in search of Widow Forrester and her daughter. It was about mid-day when he called at the smithy, the smith and Mark Sprot happening at the moment to be discussing their *twal hours* together in the adjoining public-house. On coming out, Mark skipped away down streets to his work, his paper measure hanging round his neck, and, cold as it was, having neither hat nor coat on; Mathew again came slap into the smithy, and after looking at a plough coulter which had been sent in to repair during his absence,

exclaimed, "'Od, this frost splits the vera airn, I declare" Then turning round to where Deanhouse was standing, he said, breathing the alcohol flavour strongly into his face as he spoke, "Hallo, laird, are you here?"

"Yes, Waldie," said Deanhouse, "and I have just come in time to get a scent of your forenoon at second hand. Been with Sprot, I see; a customer, eh? Going to get a mare, eh?"

"Atweel, no," said Waldie; "the bodie can neither ride horse nor meer, although he was ettlin to ride a gay high ain last night, puir bodie, and little wonder. It's no ilka day that he an' I gang awa' on sic grand missions thegither. He has a gude kind heart, Mark; a better ane than ye hae, laird, or we wadna hae needed to hae gane seekin' her. Puir Widow Forrester! However—see gin nicht," and Waldie began to work the handle of his bellows vigorously, as if he sought to drown complaint.

"Poor Widow Forrester, Mathew?" said Deanhouse. "What of her, eh?" and a twinge of remorse shot through the old man's bosom, as it always did whenever he, at any time, heard the name of Widow Forrester mentioned. Like all mean persons who attempt to find plausible excuses for shabby actions, old Cauldwell laboured hard to make people believe that, in ejecting the widow from the cottage, he had only done what was just and right; that he had acted precisely as any other proprietor would have done under similar circumstances. Mathew, knowing the laird's anxiety to justify himself in the matter, had no inclination to argue the point with him, and without deigning to answer Cauldwell's query, kept hammering away with might and main on the anvil, drowning all other sounds, by the ponderous blows of his huge forehammer. Cauldwell's curiosity, however, was excited about the widow, and having watched patiently till the mass of iron was again put into the fire, "Widow Forrester, eh, what about her, Mathew?" he repeated. "Is she gone at last, poor body, eh?"

"I hope not," replied Waldie; "I trust she's living to enjoy the gude fortune that bides her. She'll soon be a braw leddy now, laird; there's a rich freend o' her's come hame wi' walth o' siller till her. My sang, laird, ye'll need to mind your e'e: she'll see day aboot wi' you yet."

"See day about with me, eh, Mathew?" said Cauldwell. "Well, why should she not, poor woman? I was sorry, you know, to turn her out of her cottage, but what could I do? I could not allow her to remain longer without paying rent; it was setting a bad example to my other tenants, and she still owes me a year's rent; yet I allowed her to take away her furniture, which was all I could do, eh?"

"The deil thank ye, laird, for sic kindness," said Waldie. "After her gudeman, an' her gudeman's faither, had rented your cottage for saxty years, they had paid for every stane in't three times ower. Ye might weel hae letten the widow wear oot the rest o' her life in't for naething."

"Justice is justice, Waldie, eh?" rejoined Cauldwell. "Right wrongs nobody, you know. If I don't get my rents, how can I pay my blacksmith, eh? But what's this about a rich friend; late of coming; where's this friend from, Mathew, eh?"

"Faith, laird, I ken little anent him," said Waldie. "Twa nights ago a stranger cam into the smiddy here, said he was gaun to Lunnon, and wad be back in a month wi' gude news to Widow Forrester, and commissioned Deanhaugh an' me to find her oot, an' tell her sae, an' we were in Edinburgh yesterday a' day seekin' after her."

"What, eh?" said Cauldwell, who had listened to the latter part of the statement with deep interest. "Why did ye not bring him to me? Did he set off immediately, eh? How did he travel, eh?"

Here Waldie related, in his own graphic way, all that had taken place in the smithy on the night of the stranger's visit, Cauldwell nodding and winking as he went on. When he had concluded—

"Eh, what?" exclaimed the laird. "Well, then, surely if this friend was as deeply interested in the widow's welfare, as he professed to be, he would leave something with you or Flemyng to supply immediate wants; a little cash, eh?" he added, with a significant leer.

"No," said Waldie, a little puzzled by this remark. "No, no, the gentleman was in sic a hurry to catch the Lunnon mail, that he had nae time to think on ony thing, but flew aff as fast as his naig could carry him."

"Eh, what," exclaimed Cauldwell, "and did he also forget to pay you for the roughing of his horse's shoes? He would surely come down handsomely—pay you for your labour, eh?"

"No, indeed," said Waldie, who felt irritated by the sneering insinuations of old Draw-well, as he delighted to call the laird. "No, indeed; but though he had offered any thing, do ye think I wad hae ta'en't for sic a triflin' job, an' he a friend o' the widow. Na, na, Mathew Waldie doesna sail sae near the wind as you, laird. But bide ye till the gentleman comes back again, and we'll gaur ye stand aboot; he'll be here by an' bye. We'll see gin night."

"Ha! Ha!" exclaimed Cauldwell, making slowly for the smithy door. "See, gin night, will ye, eh? That night, I doubt, will be long a-coming, Waldie. Some knavish traveller whose horse shoes required roughing, and who, knowing how soft Flemyng and you were

about the widow, has played off this hoax on you, and got his job done for nothing to boot. Good bye, Waldie. Ha! Ha! The widow's wealthy friend rode away without paying his score, did he, eh? Very good, very good, indeed." And so saying, old Deanhouse strode out of the smithy, leaving Mathew standing mute and motionless, evidently at once puzzled, provoked, and crest-fallen. The remarks made by Cauldwell excited a degree of suspicion in Mathew's mind, which was not removed till the arrival of Miller Flemyng's letter, containing the order for the twenty guineas. This circumstance at once restored Waldie's confidence in the stranger's intentions. He made the miller read the letter over to him again and again. Again and again he stared at the bank-order, as if it had been some incomprehensible and mysterious document, the value of which could not be sufficiently appreciated; and at intervals during that day, as he thumped away with all his might on the anvil, with compressed lips, he was heard ever and anon exclaiming, "Gude fallow! A' right! Puir bodie! Auld Draw-wall; see gin night, eh?"

During the interval between the stranger's visit and the arrival of the miller's letter, Cauldwell had made divers visits to Waldie. He had now got what he called a hair in Mathew's neck, and seemed to take a peculiar pleasure in teazing the honest smith. His first salutation on entering the smithy door generally was,—

"Well, Mathew, how thrives your friend at court, eh? King's blacksmith, good post, Mathew; word could do it. Hear from friend lately, eh? Will some day soon, no doubt, eh?"

These banterings had always been peculiarly offensive to Mathew, and the more so that he could not parry them. The twenty guinea order, contained in the miller's letter, however, gave Mathew an advantage of which he determined to avail himself to the uttermost. For two whole days he waited anxiously for a visit from the laird, and on the third, was meditating an excursion up to Deanhouse, a place he was by no means fond of visiting, when Cauldwell made his appearance at the top of the road, leaning on his gold-headed staff. On seeing him Waldie flew to the smithy door, crossed his arms, stood erect, and with the significant smile that played on his face and kindled up his eye, he seemed the very impersonation of waggery. Thus he awaited the laird's approach, and on that gentleman coming within hearing, he bawled out in a stentorian voice,—

"Come awa', laird; gude news for ye the day, lad;—twenty guineas frae Lunnon for Widow Forrester, an' she canna be gotten to tak it. What say ye to that, man? Will ye believe the stranger to be a gentleman now, eh?"

"Oh, surely, surely; never doubted it you know, Mathew, never,

never," replied Cauldwell, sneeringly. "Twenty guineas, said you, Mathew, eh? And what or who is the gentleman who is so lavish of his money, eh?"

"Wha think you he is, man?" answered Waldie; "Wha but our auld neighbour,—a bairn brought up in the Water o' Leith, Forrester's foster-brother, wha ran awa to the sea when a callant, and has nae been heard o' sinsyne till now that he's come hame as wealthy an auld knob as yoursel, laird, eh?"

This intelligence was any thing but agreeable to Cauldwell. There could now be little doubt that the friend whom Providence had so strangely and unexpectedly raised up for the widow was a man of wealth and weight; and it is curious how quickly the feelings and sympathies of the laird turned towards her under this conviction. He would now have been most happy to oblige her to the utmost of his power.

"Ay, ay, Waldie," he said, with much feeling, "these are news, indeed, man."

"Aye, faith, so they are," replied the latter; "news, indeed, and blythe news, too, man. You'll surely tak the widow under your wing now, laird; ye were aye ready to gie them a hand to rise that were gettin' to their feet without ye. Ye'll surely help us to seek for the widow now, when we hae something to offer her."

"Ah, Mathew," exclaimed Cauldwell, in a subdued tone, "you are a sad wag, always teazing your old landlord, eh? Well, well, let bygones be bygones. I shall assist you in your inquiries after the Forresters, and nothing would please me more than to have them back into the village. Why, now, there's the widow's old cottage, that in connection with the millwright's shop, I let yesterday. The young man has little use for the cottage, and she may easily get it at a moderate rent. I should be ready to repair it, and make it otherwise comfortable for her."

"Aye, aye, laird, twenty guineas will help to mak the widow comfortable; no a bad friend to her or to ony body else. But gin she taks my advice, she'll never darken a door belonging to you again. To be sure, her ain auld cottage might be an inducement, but the auld bool is maybe as rich as a Nabob; and what wad ye think o' him biggin' a mansion as big as Deanhouse, and puttin' the widow an' her bonnie daughter in't. How wad ye like them for neighbours, laird, ye wad visit them aften aneuch, I warrant. 'Od! gin ye had been young aneuch yoursel, or had sons o' your ain, ye might hae southered up a match atween the twa houses. Aiblins your promising nephew might mak a match for the lassie. What say ye?"

"Never, Waldie, never," exclaimed Cauldwell, passionately; "he and his family have deceived me. They are a set of base, greedy wretches, who would ruin me if they could, but I defy them."

"Aye, faith, ye may weel defy ony body, laird," replied Mathew; "it taks a lang spoon to sup wi' the deil, and a sharp chield to come paddy ower you, laird. Your nephew is but a young lad yet, an' canna be up to sae mony shifts an' tacks as you."

"Learn young, learn fair, Mathew," said Cauldwell. "That young gentleman has been, I understand, early trained. When a boy, he stopped with me here, for a short time, and distinguished himself at card-playing and cock-fighting, and at nothing else. I am afraid he will do little good; but," he continued, with a sentimental sigh, "we must hope for the best. We shall see."

"Aye, see gin night," repeated Waldie, as he turned into his smithy, leaving the laird to take his own way. The honest smith had now his day of triumph: he saw that the twenty guineas, considered as an earnest of future wealth, had softened the disposition of the old miser exceedingly; and he chuckled with glee as he thought on the glorious laugh which Miller Flemyng, Mark Sprot, and himself, should enjoy at night, at deep old "Draw-well's" expense.

Mr Archibald Cauldwell returned home from Waldie's smithy in no enviable state of mind. The twenty guineas remitted for behoof of the widow, was evidence that the donor had both the will and the power to render her still further assistance, and he began to reproach himself with his former harsh conduct towards her. He could not help feeling, besides, that the manner in which he had ejected the widow from her cottage, might not stand the strict scrutiny of a person backed by wealth, and he wished that he had not been quite so harsh and peremptory on that occasion. Then he opportunely recollected that, in this matter, he had acted by the special advice of his brother, Lawyer Cauldwell, and like all persons similarly circumstanced, inwardly acquitted himself, and rolled the whole burden of the cruel transaction on the shoulders of that worthy gentleman. Although, however, he thus succeeded in partially lightening the load that oppressed him, he still felt a little uneasy. Widow Forrester and her fatherless child still haunted his memory, and after he had retired to rest, he dreamt he saw them, with their little bundles in their hands, as on the morning of their departure, taking their last farewell look of their little cottage, and their little patch of ground skirting the water. He then thought he saw them with haggard looks and pale faces, poor and meanly lodged in a small apartment, buried in the midst of a dark alley; and when he awoke, he resolved that so soon as he had ascertained from the

Miller the truth of Waldie's statement, he would deduct a small sum from the rent which the person was to pay who had taken Mrs Forrester's old cottage, in connection with the millwright's shop. He would then ferret out the widow, and offer her the cot to reside in, free of all rent or charge. Accordingly, so soon as he got up on the following morning, he dispatched his little maid down to Flemyng's mill, with a polite note to the miller, requesting a peep of the stranger's letter.

While the girl was absent on this message, Mr Cauldwell was startled by a thundering peal from the door knocker, which was followed by the angry barking of a wrinkled, black nosed, pug-dog, which the laird kept chiefly on account of its antipathy to beggars and vagrants of all descriptions, with whom it waged a perpetual and open-mouthed war. Mr Cauldwell knew that Bauldy, as the dog was called, never barked at any well dressed visitor, but, like himself, paid all due deference to gentility, reserving his rebuffs and his ill-temper for the poor and ragged. The old man therefore concluded, from the dog's incessant barking, that the present visitor must be a beggar, and when he heard a second peal from the knocker, and a second round of bow-wows from Bauldy, still more fierce than the first, he started to his feet, and rushed down stairs in a fury, determined to punish the insolent intruder. He opened the door a little way, expecting to see a sturdy vagrant, when out leaped little Bauldy with a loud bow-wow.

"Hist, hist, Bauldy!" said a voice. "Don't you know me? Have you forgotten me? Down, sir," and the laird recognized in the visitor his nephew Mr John Cauldwell.

"Ye scapegrace," said his uncle, presenting himself in his morning gown and slippers, "the animal has forgotten you, and so have I. You don't deserve to live in any one's remembrance. What do you want here, eh? Begging, eh?

"Yes, dear uncle," replied the young man, "I am begging, but it is for your forgiveness and protection."

Here the little pugnacious dog again snarled at young Cauldwell.

"Quiet, Bauldy, quiet," said the old man. "Don't like beggars, eh?" he added with a chuckle; then turning to his nephew, "My forgiveness and protection!" he exclaimed, "For what? from whom? Have not you and your's already cheated, robbed, and affronted me? Another appeal for money for your extravagant and spendthrift father, eh?"

"Alas!" said Jack, in tones intended to be very piteous and very touching, "I have this morning been expelled my father's house for taking the part of the destitute. I know that you are at all times

ready to assist the widow and the fatherless, and to you have I come to make an appeal on their behalf. That is my business, uncle.

"Widow and fatherless, Jack!" exclaimed the old man, his thoughts instantly reverting to Widow Forrester and her daughter. "What of them? What do you know of them, eh? Not in your line, Jack. You know nothing of Widow Forrester. Do you, eh?"

"Indeed, but I do though, sir," said Jack, with much humility of manner. "As I have already stated, I have been expelled my father's house, and have had his curse to breakfast this morning, for pleading on behalf of poor Martha Forrester, who was my sisters' governess last year, and who was turned off, because she was more gentle and more talented than her pupils."

"You don't say so, Jack!" exclaimed his uncle. "You don't say so, lad!" he continued in a softened and kinder tone of voice. "Come in, man. To your couch, sir," giving the dog a kick that sent him howling to his kennel. "Can't you distinguish the difference between a beggar and my nephew? Ay, Jack, and you took the part of the fatherless. Give us your hand, lad. This way, this way. Father's curse to breakfast, eh? But you shall have no such breakfast from your uncle. Something better, much better. Ay, Jack, and so you know Widow Forrester and Martha Forrester, do you? In love with Martha, Jack, eh? Lucky dog, clever fellow, ah hah! Lots of money there, Jack. Had your father had the sense to look after a woman with money, in place of marrying that lump of vulgarity your mother, he might have been a wealthy man, instead of being drowned in debt as he now is. Right, Jack, right nephew, mine," exclaimed his worthy uncle in sudden rapture, slapping his relative lovingly on the shoulder, and pushing him into the breakfast parlour before him. "Easiest way you can make money my lad, marrying a rich wife, eh?

"Alas, dear, kind uncle," said Jack, "there is no money in the case. Poor Martha Forrester has not a penny. I love her to distraction, and for this have I incurred the displeasure of both my parents."

Fudge, Jack! fudge, lad!" exclaimed his uncle with a knowing leer, "you mustn't attempt to impose on me. Mustn't tell me that you don't know that Martha Forrester is now, in expectancy at least, rich. You don't mean to say that you have not heard of the return of her rich relative? Gammon, Jack—sharp lad—can't take me in, eh?"

"My dear uncle," said Jack, "I know nothing of Martha Forrester's expectations. I know, indeed, that she resides with her mother, in a very humble tenement in the Canongate, and I suspect they must be occasionally reduced to severe straits. Martha, as I told you, was in our family as governess, but happening to excite my amiable sisters'

spleen they discharged her. They advertised for a governess, directing candidates to send their applications to my initials, Post-office. Martha having seen the advertisement, and being ignorant of who the advertising party was, sent in an application, which was delivered to me this morning at breakfast by the postman, in consequence of my not having been at the Post-office last night when the letters were assorted. My father opened the packet containing her testimonials, and on seeing that it was from Martha, charged me with having given her the information regarding the vacant appointment. I, of course, defended myself, and took the part of poor Martha, whom I love and respect. My dear uncle, she is so beautiful, so virtuous, so gentle, I am sure you will love her. Pity she is so poor. But what of her rich relative?"

"Read that, man," said old Draw-well, handing him the stranger's letter, which the girl had just brought from Flemyng. "Read that, lad, and see what a lucky dog you are. You say you know where she resides, good; but we'll keep that secret to ourselves in the meantime. The miller has been hunting the whole town in quest of her, and must not yet be enlightened on the matter. I wish to remove the prejudices which Mrs Forrester entertains against me, in consequence of my having, in accordance with your father's advice, ejected her from her cottage, shortly after the death of her husband. She need not know her good fortune till we have made our peace with her by a little kindness. I shall, in the first place, make these proud sisters of yours ask the foregiveness of the humble Martha Forrester."

"Could you not, my dear uncle," suggested Jack, "could you not insist on them taking her back into their employment, assigning as a reason for your interference an anxiety for the girl's welfare. They will be glad to do any thing to win your favour, more especially if made aware that you have determined to patronise me. It will excite their jealousy, and they will go any length to supplant me in your good graces."

"Good thought, Jack. Sharp fellow; lucky lad, Jack, eh? Give us your hand, I forgive you. We must set to work instantly, all to serve the fatherless girl, you know. A cup of coffee, Jack, and then to your father. We shall humble the proud stomachs of your sisters. Set them off to engage Martha on my recommendation, eh? Shan't have a penny of mine else, eh, Jack?" And with that the worthy, kind, benevolent Mr Cauldwell, tipped his loving and affectionate nephew a peculiar twinkle of the eye, which the no less worthy nephew returned with a knowing look. Having finished breakfast, this amiable pair of relatives set off together to carry out their designs.

CHAPTER VI.

Neevie, neevie, nick-nack,
Stands at the door back,
Nursery Rhyme.

BEFORE accompanying Deanhouse and his nephew on their mission to Mr Cauldwell's we must retrograde a little, and revert for a moment to the circumstances following Jack's departure from his father's house, as related in a former chapter. On the occasion alluded to, Jack's father seemed for an instant startled at his sudden exit; but quickly resuming his usual bland expression of countenance, and calm and collected manner, he sat down, and very composedly finished his breakfast. His daughters sat silent. The disclosure which had just been made, the scene which had just been exhibited, augured well for their prospects, and they had too much self-love, too high an opinion of what was due to their many estimable qualities, to interfere in behalf of a brother who had forfeited every pretension to their esteem. They had on former occasions suspected Jack of designs against their interests, and now therefore refrained from saying a word in his favour. Mrs Cauldwell, however, who could not on any occasion sit without speaking, and who, moreover, like all mothers, was always ready to take her son's part, right or wrong, broke the silence, by exclaiming in a piteous tone—

"Poor John! where can he have gone to? Poor fellow! he has had no breakfast. My dear," she continued, addressing her husband, "it was cruel in you to send your only son forth from under your roof without his breakfast. You should really, my dear, learn to govern your passion better. The poor lad is not to blame, he is the victim of that designing and sly huzzy Martha Forrester."

"It's all very well, madam, for you to say so," replied Mr Cauldwell, "but he is to blame. He has listened to the blandishments of this syren, and has shut his ears to the voice of truth. He has forgot the duty he owes to me, so say no more on the subject. Your profligate son, madam, comes not within the threshold of my door again."

Thus chastised, Mrs Cauldwell did not venture to say another word

on the matter while her husband was present; but so soon as he left the house for the Court, both mother and daughters hastened to make up for lost time, by pouring out a continuous torrent of abuse against the offending parties.

"Papa is in a terrible state of excitement to-day," said Miss Maria. "I never saw him in such a passion before."

"He never had such cause before," replied Miss Jane. "Only think of our brother taking up with that ungrateful girl, who endeavoured to disgrace you, dear Maria."

"All Martha's fault," exclaimed Mrs Cauldwell; "poor, dear, simple boy," she added, tears rising to her eyes, "what will become of him? His father will never forgive him, never. Oh! the vile creature, to bring such misery into such a happy family."

"Aye, we were a happy family," said Miss Maria.

"And we were a loving family," said Miss Jane.

"And you were all dutiful children," said Mrs Cauldwell.

"Oh! how I could trample on the vile creature," exclaimed Miss Maria, striking her foot violently on the floor.

"I could tear the eyes out of her head," screamed Miss Jane, spreading out her ten talons, as if preparing to carry her purpose into execution.

"I could murder the wretch," yelled Mrs Cauldwell, lifting the poker, and smashing to atoms a piece of coal in the grate.

"Not so fast, not so fast," exclaimed Mr Archibald Cauldwell, as he stepped into the parlour, having been admitted into the house by his nephew's pass-key, that gentleman himself following. They had, however, stood in the lobby some minutes before entering, and had thus heard every word of the conversation that had passed between Mrs Cauldwell and her amiable daughters, as above recorded.

Had a thunderbolt lighted amongst the ladies, they could not have been more alarmed and confounded than by this sudden and unexpected appearance of their wealthy relative Mr Archibald Cauldwell, who had not visited them for a long period before. But if his sudden appearance alone astonished and perplexed them, his subsequent address astonished and perplexed them still more.

"Talk as you will of any body," exclaimed he; "Take your precious selves for a text, good one to preach from, eh? But never after this mention the name of Martha Forrester but with respect. She is a young lady you ought to be proud to revere, so no more about it. Away to her as quick as you can, down on your marrow-bones before her, ask her forgiveness, bring her back here, and take her again into your family. My good nephew has set his mind on her; must have her. How will

you like her for a sister-in-law, eh? You are beggars you know, and she is rich in beauty and virtue."

"It is well, sir," exclaimed Mrs Cauldwell, "that my husband is from home, otherwise you would not have dared thus to insult us."

"Ha!" shouted Deanhouse, "Brother out, eh? Hunting for clients, eh? Hunting for a silver skin, to roll his pretty darlings in, eh? Hunting after money, always a scarce commodity with him. Any large estate newly purchased, eh? Rich now, you girls, no use for old Deanhouse; nothing to you, something to Jack, though. The disinherited son must inherit uncle's fortune. What say you, Jack? Will you be my heir?

"La, uncle," screamed both young ladies at once, "can you be so cruel? You always said we were to heir your fortune, and we never dreamed you would set us aside for John, who is undeserving your favour;" and they burst into tears.

"Don't believe them, sir," here broke in Mrs Cauldwell, "don't believe them. John has been a little foolish, indeed. He has been imposed on by Martha Forrester, but he is a good boy, nevertheless; a dutiful son, and has been shockingly used this morning by his father, so do, dear sir, do take his part."

"And so I shall, sister mine," replied Deanhouse. Am I not doing so now, eh? You and I will agree on this matter, I see. Dispatch daughters instantly to Martha Forrester—make them acknowledge their former cruelty to her,—know all about it, Jack told me. Let them ask her to become their preceptress. Perhaps I may intend her for Jack's wife yet—don't know—nay, start not. No frowning, eh? Do this or I cut you all off—withdraw my support from brother—make him bankrupt—you beggars. Like that, eh?

"Oh! oh! oh!" sobbed the Misses Cauldwell.

"Oh! oh! oh!" sobbed Mrs Cauldwell; and she was on the eve of bursting into a torrent of invective, when her darling son, Jack, who still continued standing at his uncle's back, coughed slightly, and caught her eye. He gave her a look, of which she at once knew the meaning, shook his fist at his uncle behind his back, and then speaking out, begged her to yield to Mr Cauldwell's wishes. Quickly the little woman changed the current of her wrath, and poured it out on the heads of her daughters. She called them slatterns, whom she had toiled and slaved for night and day. Blamed them for prejudicing her mind against Martha, who, after all, she had always considered an excellent girl, and said, that since their uncle wished them to apologise for their past conduct to her, the sooner they were away the better. The only thing she had an objection to, was to marry her son to a girl in humble

life, when he might so easily obtain the hand of a lady of rank and fortune.

"So might my brother have done when he married you, eh?" replied her loving brother-in-law. "But love—love you know, not to be sneered at, eh? No accounting for tastes, eh? Jack, in fact, has set his heart on having the girl, and I'm determined to back him. You'll assist me, I know—fellow feeling, you know. Poor girl yourself once, eh? Chief cause of my mission here just now."

"And a strange mission it is to come on, brother, after so long an absence," said Mrs Cauldwell. "Pity my husband is from home, but you will find him in the Outer-House; he will be glad to see you. Girls obey your uncle, visit Martha, make an apology to her, bring her up with you. Your uncle would like, I daresay, to see his niece to be. She is a pretty girl, and a good, most certainly."

"Good taste, Jack, I knew it—pretty girl, eh?" said Deanhouse. "Glad to hear it, sister—like to see good looking women. All bachelors do, eh? We shall be all right by and bye. Meantime, Jack, come along, you and I shall call at Parliament House, see brother, explain, reconcile, and come back together to dine. Invite Martha to join us—we shall have quite a family party." So saying, old Cauldwell took his nephew by the arm, and they set off together to the Parliament House, leaving Mrs Cauldwell to send her daughters forth on their mission to Widow Forrester's.

It is now necessary that we should leave the Cauldwell family for a little, and accompany old Maillie on an excursion on which she had set out a few minutes before John and his uncle had made their appearance at the house of her master. It will be remembered that Maillie had been much pleased with the manner in which Mr John Cauldwell had advocated the cause of her favourite, Martha Forrester, and the disinterested kindness he had evinced on that occasion, astonished as well as delighted her. His character, which she had hitherto considered as of the worst description, now appeared to her in a totally different light, and the unexpected discovery of generosity, where she had formerly seen nothing but selfishness, made her warm in her expressions of admiration, and determined her to back his suit by all the means in her power. It will be recollected that she had advised Jack to visit his uncle, and that Jack, in going to Deanhouse, seemed to be but acting in conformity with her advice. Accordingly Maillie, so soon as breakfast was over, and the house put in order, prepared to set out on a visit to Mr Archibald Cauldwell, whom, as well as his younger brother, she had nursed, and although little subsequent intimacy had been maintained between them, that gentleman always mani-

fested the greatest esteem for her. Maillie had never on any former occasion, asked any favour of him, and she felt, perhaps, the more emboldened to solicit one now, that her petition was to be preferred in favour of another, who was one of his own kindred, and, indeed, his heir-at-law.

Having arrayed herself in her little black bonnet and ancient red cloak, and taken a staff in her hand, for she now required such aid, she set out for Deanhouse. It was a raw winter day; the air was thick and drizzly; all nature was shrouded in a mist, which ever and anon fell dropping in pattering showers, hanging on the naked boughs of the trees in clear crystal drops, until shaken off by some slight breath of wind that now and then rustled among the branches, and made partial openings in the dense mass of misty vapour. The little brown pathway by which Maillie descended the Castlehill was clammy and slippery, and the Castle was dimly seen towering through the haze, like some giant form of unknown shape and substance.

All nature was drowsy and listless, and poor Maillie would have been drowsy and listless too, but for the excitement occasioned by her mission, and her anxiety to forward the happiness and the interests of a deserving young man, as she now considered Mr Cauldwell junior to be. Her heart was full of kindness, and she walked onward with a lightness of step astonishing for one of her years.

After passing the North Loch, and reaching the summit of the Kirkbrachead, Maillie strained her eyes anxiously forward, endeavouring to catch a glimpse of the little village, in the vicinity of which she had spent her early days; but the shy little town, as if averse to grieve her, by conjuring up melancholy associations, buried itself in the mist, and lay hidden and undiscernable, save by the undefined mass of deeper grey that overshadowed that portion of the picture where the village was situate. The whole scene, however, was present to the mind's-eye of Maillie, and as she again strained her vision in a vain attempt to penetrate the thick haze, her firmness forsook her, her limbs tottered beneath her, and she leaned back for support on the little feal-dike which at that time skirted the roadway. Nearly a quarter of a century had elapsed since she had visited that locality, yet at this moment that quarter of a century had left no trace of its existence on her memory. One ray of "auld lang syne," had dawned on her soul, and enlivened it with all the brightness and joyousness of morning. In that momentary vision, Deanhouse was dreamed of, shaded walks rose to view, soft voices broke upon the ear, and sighs, and looks, and vows long forgotten, were conjured up and remembered—to be forgotten once more.

Strange that the young should be wiser than the old, that youth alone should be qualified to invest time with its true value—that a

quarter of a century appears so large a space of time in prospective, so small in retrospection—and, strange contradiction, that we always look to the future for happiness, while we are continually lamenting the decay of that primitive simplicity which existed in our early days. Man lives on the recollections of his early life; old Maillie dreamed of the past, and was happy.

As Maillie approached the little village, the mist grew more and more dense, which, combined with her dimmed vision, prevented her distinguishing one house from another, and thus she trudged on through the little street, without recognising either person or place distinctly. At length, she came to Waldie's smithy, where the din of the forehammer, as it rung on the anvil, and mingled with the treble tinkle of the smaller hammers, reminded her of that well-known and much-frequented rendezvous, with which she had been once quite familiar. She paused an instant, and thought she heard merry voices mingling with the iron-toned sounds, and was so struck with their resemblance to those which she had heard in the same place in other days, that she involuntarily stept forward, endeavouring to catch a glimpse of the noisy company within. The light from the smithy partially dispelled the thick cloud of vapour by which the houses all around were obscured, and she could see, although indistinctly, one figure, which she at once recognised. The outline was so large, the light so broad, there could be no mistaking it. It could be no one else than Halbert Flemyng. Maillie was anxious to see him. When she resided in the neighbourhood, the miller was a young man, but possessed of the same jovial disposition, the same amplitude of person, the same good and kind heart as now. Maillie would gladly have spoken with him, but her anxiety to see old Deanhouse induced her to forego the present opportunity, and to proceed on her journey.

Maillie arrived at the ancient gateway leading to Deanhouse, opened the gate, entered, and pattered along the gravel walk. She was struck by the ghastly appearance of the bare trees, with their tops buried in mist, their long branches here and there shooting across overhead, forming a sort of ribbed and skeleton archway. She approached the house. The old porchway thrust itself forward from the mist-enveloped building, as if it had come half-way to meet and welcome her. She lifted and let fall the ponderous knocker, and, exhausted by her long walk, set herself down to rest on the stone settle that stood beside the porchway, to await the result. The sound of the knocker reverberated through the large empty house, exciting the wrath of the little dog, who barked loud and fiercely. By and bye, a barefooted girl came to the door, opened it a very little way, and cautiously asked Maillie what she wanted.

"Will ye tak this up to your master, my dear," replied Maillie, taking from her pocket a small locket; "shew Mr Cauldwell this, and say that the owner is here, an' wishes to speak wi' him instantly."

"My master has gane awa' out wi' a young gentleman, his nevoy, in an awfu' hurry," answered the girl.

"Aye," said Maillie; "and ken ye whaur they're to, my dear?"

"They didna say," said the girl; "but I'm jalousin' they're awa up to my master's brother, Mr Cauldwell, in the Castle Hill, for I heard them, when they were at breakfast, speakin' about gaun there. But ye needna fash to follow them, nor ye needna hae come here expeckin' ony thing. Ye maunna be muckle acquainted in this quarter, or ye wadna hae come here seekin' awmous."

"I want nae awmous, ye peep sma'," said Maillie, angrily. "Do I look like a beggar? Waes me, but times are changed, sair changed, indeed!" and she turned her back on the old house, in a melancholy mood, and retraced her steps down the avenue with a heavy heart, although she was pleased to learn that the uncle and nephew were away together, and had no doubt that the old man had gone up with the lad to endeavour to persuade his father to receive him again into favour.

Maillie now directed her steps to the village on her way homewards. Again she reached the smithy door, and again heard the same noises as before, and thought she could perceive the same figure she had formerly taken to be that of Miller Flemyng, with whom she longed much to have some conversation. Approaching a little closer to the smithy door, to insure herself of the miller's identity, a full, broad, merry laugh rang through the smithy, drowning the noise of hammer and anvil, and this laugh Maillie at once knew to be that of honest Halbert Flemyng. Maillie drew still closer to the smithy door, desirous, yet half afraid, to enter. Again she hesitated, again she gathered courage, stepped forward, and had almost reached the door, when her foot was caught in the sunk circle for rimming cart wheels. She stumbled, and giving a cry, out rushed Flemyng, Waldie, and Sprot, raising up, and bearing the poor old woman to the smithy cautiously and kindly. Little Mark bustled about, and, in a twinkling, had constructed a new fashioned sort of sofa, made up of a wheel-barrow, a cart-back, and Mathew's coat for a cushion, whereon Maillie was placed with all gentleness.

While the old woman, in a state of insensibility, leaned back on this rudely constructed couch, little Mark Sprot ran hither and thither, in a state of great excitement, exclaiming, "Puir bodie! Puir bodie! Wha is she? Hope she's no hurt. Terrible business! Puir bodie! Puir bodie!"

Waldie, no less kind, but less talkative, flew to his universal medi-

cine chest, the greybeard, filled up a glass to the brim, and carrying it with so steady a hand that not a drop ran over, he held it out to the unconscious old woman, saying, "Tak ye this toothfu', gudewife, it 'ill chase the dwaam frae your heart. Sair fa'! Dark as pitch! Dribble dram cures a' ills; mak ye a' right by an' bye. See gin night."

Flemyng, who had been the first to reach the door on hearing the scream from Maillie, and who had lifted her in his arms, and borne her into the smithy, stood by, attentively watching her. The poor old woman had grasped him by the hand when she awoke from her stupor, and sat gazing at him with a look of kindness and gratitude that touched the heart of the honest miller, who, in looking at her in turn, began to have a faint recollection of having seen her before, nay, felt as if he could have named her. Still, however, his memory refused to perfect what it had suggested, and he continued to gaze on her with a kind of bewilderment. Suddenly he felt the old woman's feeble withered fingers returning the pressure of his hard, horny hand, and in a very low tone of voice, she exclaimed,

"Gude, kind, Halbert Flemyng, aye the same generous and ready hand as ever!"

The moment the tones of her voice, low and indistinct though they were, reached the miller's ear, a full recollection of the speaker burst upon him, and he exclaimed, in much surprise,

"The gude be here! Maillie Mathison, can this be you?"

"Indeed is't, Halbert Flemyng, me and nae ither," replied Maillie. "It's a lang time now since you an' I met, an' there's an unco odds on ye, miller, sin' I saw ye last; ye're beginnin' to look a wee auld, Halbert, though ye're but a youth to me, man. Nae fools like auld fools, miller. I happened to be passing the smiddy, an' hearin' your voice, I cam creeping close to the door to get a keek o' your face, when my fit slippit, an' I was whomled ower amang thae auld cart wheels, plough coulters, an' teethed harrows. It's a wonder I'm no a' torn to bits. Mathew," turning to the smith, "ye should keep your door better redd up, man. Your faither, honest man, used to be unco particular about keeping the front o' the smiddy aye clean an' tidy."

"Did ye ken my faither, gudewife," said the smith with a look of interest.

"Aye, atweel did I, Mathew, an' you too, although ye hae forgotten me," replied Maillie.

"What, Mathew," said the miller, "ye surely canna hae forgotten Maillie, wha was ance in the Dean, and wha used to gie ye, as I hae heard ye say, sic dunts o' bread an' butter when ye gaed up wi' messages to the house."

"Forgotten Maillie i' the Dean," exclaimed Waldie. "Na, na, I

haena forgotten her, nor ever wad. But, indeed, I didna ken this was her. Weel do I mind her bread an' butter; better far than I do ony thing else about the Dean. Callants aye hungry, ye ken, Maillie. Ne'er forget them wha are kind to them; but see gin night."

"Poor reception, Mathew," said the miller, "ye gie your auld friend when she comes to ca' on ye, setting traps to break her neck. Ye maun really keep better order about your doors."

"Oh, aye, by and bye; see gin night," replied Waldie.

"But what has become o' ye, Maillie?" said Flemyng. "Where on earth have you been a' this time? I had gi'en ye up as dead; you have been a weary while awa'. Mark, do ye mind o' Maillie?"

"Aye, that I do," replied Sprot, "an' ill wad it become me no to mind her. Weel do I recolleck when I first gaed to whip-the-cat wi' auld Gibby Clipclouts; he was gey hard up whiles, puir bodie, when tred was nae brisk. He was unco fond o' the drappy, and it was aye frae hand to mouth wi' him, so that my neebour prentice an' I had sometimes gey hungry mous; and often after I ran awa frae auld Gibby, an' was at my prenticeship in Edinburgh, I was wont to mind on the dads o' fat beef I used to get frae Maillie at the Dean, and the whangs o' pease bannocks I was wont to get frae Mrs Forrester, puir bodie!" and here the active little fellow bustled about Maillie, asking anxiously how she felt, and concluding with a proposal that she should go up and see his wife and weans.

"By and bye, by and bye, Mark," said the miller; "let Maillie rest hersell awee whaur she is first."

"Aweel, sae be it," said Mark; "but Maillie's ane o' them without wha's help I couldna hae warstled up the brae ava."

"Up, Mark!" exclaimed the miller, "Od, ye're no very far up yet man; your nose is still unco near the grund; an' gin it werena that ye rax your neck weel, an' carry a gey high head, I kenna how ye could keep your snout out o' the glaur ava."

"Ah, but it's weel worth my while to look high, Miller Flemyng," said Mark, "if it was only to get a glint o' that jolly face o' yours, an' it maks it easier for me to do sae, that ye dinna swither to cast down a blythe blink o' your ee on me. It lifts me wonderfully up, and gaurs me whiles think I'm maistly as big as yoursell."

"Weel, Mark," exclaimed Flemyng, "the Highland guardsman was right when he said ye was a queer creature. Certes, ye are a pawky, wheedlin' body, an' hae a bit glib oily tongue o' your ain. But how do ye feel yoursell now, Maillie," he said, addressing the latter, who had evidently recovered from the effects of her fall, as she seemed to be enjoying the bantering sort of conversation between Sprot and Flemyng.

"I feel quite well now, thank ye, miller," replied Maillie, rising to her feet. "Mony thanks for your kind attentions. I maun now be trottin' hame as fast as I can. Mrs Cauldwell will be needin' me to help her wi' the cookin' o' the dinner, and the deil will be to pay, an' naething to pay him wi'."

"Let Mrs Cauldwell yatter awa there," said the miller, "as lang as she likes. But are ye still wi' thae Cauldwells, Maillie?"

"Indeed am I, Halbert," she replied; "I hae been the maist o' my days wi' them, an' wad like to dee amang them. We hae been lang thegither noo, Mr Flemyng," and here the old woman sighed deeply.

"Auld friends an' auld times seem to be drawing thegither again," said the miller. "I had a very unexpected visit from a very auld acquaintance, who, I daursay, you'll mind weel o'. Ye recollect John Forrester, the millwright, wha stayed in the village here."

"Recollect him, puir fallow," exclaimed Maillie, with peculiar emphasis, "how can I ever forget him. His mother an' I were the twa auldest friends in the parish. But what have ye heard aboot him? What auld friend visited ye connected wi' him? Was it his widow?"

"Na, na, no his widow," replied Flemyng, with great animation; "no his widow, but his foster-brother?"

"His foster-brother?" exclaimed Maillie, starting back in a state of great excitement, the staff on which she had been leaning falling to the ground. "His foster-brother?" she continued, clasping her hands together, and speaking in breathless and hurried tones. "When, when? What of him? Is he still alive? Was he seeking me?" and she gazed anxiously in the miller's face.

"Seeking you, Maillie?" replied the honest miller, much surprised at her agitation. "No, he certainly did not ask for you, although I know that, like many others, he has been obliged to you for many kindnesses. But he was hurried, and had no time to inquire after any of his old acquaintances, excepting Widow Forrester, whose mother-in-law brought him up, and for whom, and all connected with her, he, of course, entertains the most grateful affection. I have lately had a letter from him, in which he states, that, having now realized a fortune, he intends shortly to return and adopt the widow as his sister, and her daughter as his heiress."

Maillie listened to the latter part of Flemyng's statement with intense and breathless interest; but seemed incredulous—the intelligence being too good for belief. It evidently affected her deeply, however, as tears rolled down her cheeks, while she exclaimed in half intelligible sentences,—

"How could he ask for me, after all, when he knows nothing of the interest I took in him. Why has he remained so long away? Is he indeed alive? and shall I see him—hear him speak before I die? Is he not a noble fellow? Is it not generous, manly, grateful of him to return good for good, to befriend those now who helped him in his hour of need? But I knew he would return some day; I knew he had the old blood in his veins. And have you communicated the news to the widow?" she added, looking earnestly at the miller.

"I have not yet been able to find out her residence, Maillie," replied the latter, still puzzled to account for the interest Maillie had evinced in the matter, "although my two friends here and I have been making every inquiry after her since her brother-in-law's visit. Sometime ago, I addressed a letter to her, to lie in the window of the Edinburgh Post-Office, in the hope it might catch her eye, or that of some one who knew her. That letter, my friend, Sprot, here, informs me has been sent for and taken away, and, as I presume, by the widow. I, therefore, expect a visit from her every hour, and am anxiously awaiting her appearance."

"Nae necessity for your waitin' till she comes to you, miller," said Maillie, "I ken her place o' residence, an' can conduct you to it; for although she may have received your letter, she is not likely to be abroad on such a day as this. Helen Forrester, although a much younger woman than I am, is, like me, frail and failing. But her daughter Martha is a most beautiful and amiable girl. Indeed, she's a perfect angel baith in body an' mind, an' her acquirements would enable her to grace ony station in life."

"Indeed," exclaimed the delighted miller, "then that will please the auld chap, her uncle. For in a letter which I had from him, and which old Deanhouse has just now, he enjoins her mother not to allow her daughter to form a connection in the lower ranks of life. Her fortune, he says, will be considerable, and he wishes her to be well connected. The pride of birth, Maillie," continued the miller, "The pride of birth. That old fellow must have some of the old leaven in him. He doesna spring from millers or millwrights either, I'm thinkin'."

"Well," said Maillie, "that is a strange coincidence. Ken ye that Martha was governess in our family, but was turned awa for being ower bonny an' ower clever. My young master is ower the lugs in love wi' her, and was turned out o' his faither's house this morning for takin' the part of puir Martha. I was proud to see the way the callant stood up for my favourite, and advised him to come down an' seek his uncle's protection. I was up by at the Dean house e'enow, but learn that the uncle and nephew are out together. I meant to have spoken

to the auld man in the callant's favour. My heart warmed to him for advocating the cause o' Martha; and gin we can strike up a match between them, it will please his uncle. Like a' young men, my young maister's a wee wild, but Martha has charms enough to win him from his present irregular habits; and there canna be purer blood than that o' Cauldwell. They can trace it back for twenty generations."

"A forpit o' chaff for twenty generations!" exclaimed the honest miller. "I have nae patience wi' sic crotchets, as if we werena a' made o' common clay, and as if our nature didna gie noble qualities to peasants as well as princes. The lassie had far better marry ane o' her ain rank in life, and let them clamber up the brae thegither. They'll maybe need a lift at starting, and gin Martha makes a gude choice, I'll gie them a shove forward mysell. If her auld uncle winna do't, Deanhaugh maun just pit his ain shouther to the wheel. He has done the like afore, an' is now better able than ever."

"Aye," exclaimed Maillie, "I often wondered Deanhaugh that a kind-hearted man like you could hae allowed Widow Forrester leave the Water o' Leith. Ye might hae paid her cottage rent among ye, ye wadna hae missed it; and then to lose sight o' her a'thegither after she gaed to Edinburgh. What was the reason o' that, miller Flemyng? It wasna right; it wasna like ye."

"It was not, Maillie; it was not," said the honest miller, the tears rising to and filling his eyes. "I indeed helped her a little, but no sae muckle as I should hae done, and to tell you the truth, she slipped latterly out o' my mind a'thegither. I really an' truly forgot her."

"Ah! that forgetfulness, miller," said Maillie, "is the cause o' mair woe than the warld kens o'. When folks are happy themselves, they canna think it possible that ony body else should be miserable. Forgetfulness does mair harm than positive oppression. The last destroys quickly; the first leaves the sufferer to pine an' die by inches."

"A' true, a' ower true, Maillie," said the miller much affected. "I must endeavour to mak amends for a faut, and shall put mysell under your directions in this case; but we'll talk o' the matter as we go along. Meantime, if you'll step ower to Sprot's house a wee, till Waldie an' I get ready, we'll a' jog on to the widow's thegither."

This arrangement made, Maillie, escorted by Mark, went over to his house, and was introduced to his little wife, whom she delighted by telling how well she remembered her little husband in his boyish days. And she took the little Sprots on her knee, hugging and kissing them, and crooning to them a great variety of such venerable rhymes as "Zickety dock," "John Smith, fellow fine," &c. and then she plunged her hand into her capacious pocket, and drew out a handful of coppers,

which she divided among them, when they all scampered off to the baker's, and came back with a splendid assortment of gingerbread men and women, and cocks and hens, and dogs and rabbits, enough to fill another Noah's ark. Maillie obtained a full account of little Mark's greatness from his proud little wife, who told her all about his wonderful poetical genius; how he had been elected poet-laureate at the last meeting of the village club; how no such honour had ever before been conferred on any one in that locality. And the little woman added, that "although Mark was sometimes detained rather late out at night, he aye lookit after her an' the bairns, and keepit them aye weel fed an' clad." During this time, Mark kept running in and out, till the miller and smith made their appearance, when the whole cavalcade set off to Edinburgh, Sprot entertaining them at intervals on the road by reciting the following poem, which, he said, had been composed on such a day as that they were abroad in, and which he had entitled

THE DAGGY[1] DAY.

The pale sun glints[2] ower the high black houses
Wi' a hazy brow, an' a drumlie[3] ee;
The cauld clud o' sleet dissolves an' oozes
Through a' the abodes of chill penury:
The barefitted bairnies, hardy an' wee,
Tot ower the causey, sae slippy an' daggy,
Wi' grannie's wee pickle sugar an' tea,
Or the sour milk-can, an' sma' meal baggy—
Alack! but the stock is e'en scrimpit an' scraggy[4].

The sun has gaen down, he winna appear,
An' even the daylight snoozing dozes;
Puir shivering wretches, meagre an' drear,
Stand at the taps o' the laigh-browed closes;
An' tears, a' dyed wi' yestreen's fause roses,
Their sallow pale faces trickle adown:
While her wiles an' wants, lean Vice discloses,
In the tattered shreds of each faded gown,
And grim an' ghastly death lurks in each haggard frown.

[1] Dark, damp, gloomy, cheerless, all in one.—Literally a Scotch mist. [2] Peeps.
[3] Thick, troubled. [4] Straitened, and low.

The auld man stots[1] wi' the stoup for water,
The auld wife stoits wi' the wee black bottle,
Shaking her head wi' a whaizling[2] clatter,
That's heard half-choakt in her husky throttle
While swallowing dram, or smoking dottle[3];
In the dark an' dingy corners are seen
Auld worn out beldames wha fume an tottle,
A' lade wi' the profits o' vice yestreen;
When vice and age have met, the picture's dark, I ween.

Frae the lang dark stairs o' each close an' wynd
The beggars come hirplin' an' bauchlin' out[4];
Their limbs a' grow cripple, their een gae blind,
When ower the doorstane they set their snout;
While some, wha for weeks had been housed wi' mout,[5]
Get happed in a big coat or raughan[6] grey,
An a' set out on their weel huntit rout,
Kennin' that few hearts can send them away
Unserved frae their doors on siccan a cauld raw day.

The day daggles[7] on—scarce ony are seen,
Save them wha maun seek a hame in the street;
The jaded coal horses, scranky[8] an' lean,
Are a' droukit[9] through wi' the cauld raw sleet,
Nae wreathing o' smoke tokens inward heat,
But ilka rib sticks through their lank thin hides;
Their red-faced owners breathe steam through the weet,
That bodes a fire in their drouthy insides,
Wad swallow ocean up, an' a' its thousand tides.

In ilka high attic, an' laigh dark door,
In ilka slee corner an' sheltered nook,
Are drowsy faces a' peeping out ower
Wi' surly brow an' wi' girnigo[10] look:
The sash is shot up, the head gies a jouk,[11]
Doun comes the window wi' rickety din;
While some smoke a pipe, an' some spell a book,
An' some frae their thoughts strive pleasure to win;
But there's little comes out, whaur there's little gaes in.

[1] Staggers. [2] A hoarse wheezing voice. [3] Remnant of tobacco in pipe.
[4] Shuffling along in old shoes. [5] Bare. [6] Plaid. [7] Drizzles.
[8] Meagre. [9] Drenched. [10] Peevish. [11] Bend.

The day dwines awa', an' the night comes on,
The smeekit sleet fa'in' faster an' faster,
Till the wind begins wi' low hollow moan,
Swelling out to a snoring sou-waster;
Scotch skies are dour, but the wind their master,
Will clear the stars frae the cluds through the night,
An' this daggy day will serve to foster
Love for the morning, all radiant and bright,
That will steek out the darkness, an' let in the light.

An' the sun shall arise ower the gude auld town,
Wi' a braid brent brow, an' a sparklin' ee;
An' Nature shall wauk[1] frae her winter swoon,
An' the young buds shall prick thro' the steeve auld tree;
An' the wee birds shall chirp fou merrily,—
An' the weans shall daff in their pranksome play,
An' the town's sweet face smiling cheerily,
When kissed by the sun, like a bridegroom gay,
Shall blush like blooming bride, upon her bridal day.

Stand proud on thy summit, bold rock built town,
Though whiles ower thy beauties dark clouds may lower,
Foul fa' the Scot wha wad whomle[2] thee doun,
Forgetting thine ancient glory an' power;
The sun blinks bonnily after a shower,—
The young wheat peeps green frae amang the white snaw;—
And thou Edina, sweet Freedom's strong tower,
Art dearer to me ilka time I'm awa',—
Exiled were I frae thee, my heart wad burst in twa.

[1] Awake. [2] Turn topsy turvy.

CHAPTER VII.

Humble worth and honest pride,
Gaurs presumption stand aside.
Old Proverb.

It is necessary that we should now return for a time to Mr Cauldwell's house in Ramsay Garden, and give an account of what occurred there after Mr Archibald Cauldwell and his loving nephew had left it. To say merely that the young ladies were angry, would convey but a very imperfect idea of the state of their minds. They felt that they had been overreached, outdone, and that by a brother who had nothing to recommend him to their uncle but the abuse which he must have heaped on them, and the make-believe pity which he had manifested towards Martha, thereby exciting the old man's sympathy, and playing on his feelings. They knew from experience, however, that their uncle was not to be trifled with; that his injunctions were absolute commands; and that the only chance they had of recovering their lost positions, was to outdo their brother in their implicit obedience to the old man's behests. It was, however, some time before they could make up their minds to proceed on the humiliating expedition formerly referred to, namely, to express contrition for their harsh conduct to Martha Forrester. Were they, forsooth, to become the suppliants of an impertinent thing, for whom they entertained the most supreme contempt? How could their mamma have stood passively by, and heard their uncle impose such cruel commands on them; and they wept and wished they had eloped with Messrs Twist and Tape when they were importuned, nay, implored to do so by these gallant gentlemen. They had refused good matches in the money way to keep up the honour and dignity of the family, and now here were they to be disgraced by having a governess for a sister-in-law.

Mrs Cauldwell coaxed and scolded her daughters alternately; told them they ought to be happy to see their uncle in the house, after so long an absence, and added, that they ought to be proud of having such a brother as John. She moreover said, that were it not for the absence of Maillie, whom she had allowed to go out for two hours, and the consequent entailment on her of the task of superintending the cooking of the dinner, she would have accompanied them herself with

the greatest possible pleasure. Soon afterwards, the young ladies set out on their embassy; but they certainly looked as unlike the characters they went in—sisters of charity—messengers of love and kindness—as it is possible to conceive. The day continued drizzly and wet, the sisters walked sullenly apart, and, by the time they had reached the head of the Canongate, they were drenched, cold, and perfectly miserable.

The very idea of inquiring after widows residing in closes, was shocking to these very fastidious ladies. That they should be hunting after a person in such a locality as the Hammermens' Close, Canongate, horrid! There was no help for it, however, and they wandered up and down the damp and narrow street, on a dark and dismal day, looking in vain for the name of the alley, their foolish pride preventing them making inquiry at the people they met. At length, however, fate, or chance, or the genii of the old Canongate, seemed ashamed of seeing them stalking about without any apparent object on such a day, and over a low-browed archway they discovered the words "Hammermens' Close." They were about to enter, when they encountered a very decently dressed old woman coming out with a little basket in her hand. They at once accosted her, and asked if she could direct them to the residence of Widow Forrester. The old lady, although on her way to market, immediately turned with them, saying, "I'll show ye the door, my dawties; this way, this way." Then turning round, she added, "Ye'll be acquainted wi' the widow, nae dout."

"No," they said, "they had no such acquaintance; they had come to make some inquiry about her character, with a view to assist in extricating her from poverty if she proved deserving."

"God bless ye baith, my bonny dawties, "said Mrs Muckle, for it was that good creature. "Ye hae been surely sent frae heaven. There's no a mair deservin' woman in the town o' Edinburgh than Widow Forrester. Her daughter has been out o' place this while, and they just hae enough ado to fend. Poor Martha, her daughter, got an unco fright last night."

"Indeed!" exclaimed one of the sisters. "An awful fright, was she assailed by bogles, or witches, or brownies? These sort of creatures must be very plentiful in this dismal neighbourhood."

"There are far mair uncanny things than bogles, witches, or brownies either, to be met wi' in these dark closes," replied Mrs Muckle. "There are devils in human shape prowling about, endeavouring to lead youth, beauty, and innocence astray; and wha come to sic humble neighbourhoods, thinking poortith is easily bribed, and simple innocence easily imposed on. God keep you, my dears, frae sic attacks."

Here the Misses Cauldwell drew close together, looked around them

timidly, and exclaimed, " If this be a den of the kind you allude to, it is high time we were away. Has Martha Forrester been frightened from propriety—has she been led astray?" and they looked at the good woman, as if they would have been delighted with an answer in the affirmative.

" Na, na," exclaimed Mrs Muckle, " but she was assailed in this very entry last night by some ne'er-do-weel miscreant, an' gude kens what might hae been the result, hadna a brave defender come in time to knock the villain down an' rescue her."

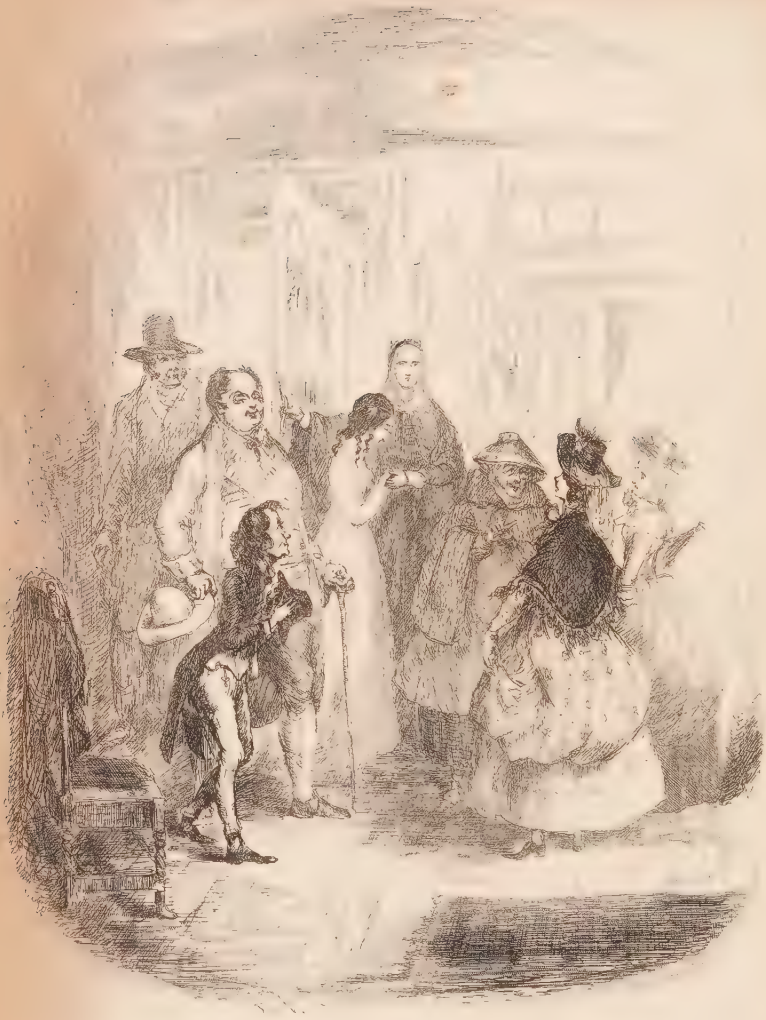
" Indeed," said the young ladies, " then we must go on, for it is Martha we wish particularly to see."

It instantly occurred to Mrs Muckle that these young ladies were of the family in which the governess' situation was vacant, for which Martha had applied, and she said, as she led them down the close, " Indeed, gin ye are needin' a governess, my bonny leddies, ye'll no get ane to fit ye better than Martha. She is a' bodies body here; and gin the recommendations, the blessings o' the hale neighbourhood, wad be o' ony avail, I'll get twenty respectable folk in a crack, ilka ane o' wham wad gie her a better character than anither."

" Speak a little lower, good woman," exclaimed one of the young ladies; " we are on a message of that description, but wish it not to be known here. Please shew us the house."

" This way, this way, my dears," repeated Mrs Muckle, and she led them to Mrs Forrester's door, which, after a gentle tap, she opened, and introduced the Misses Cauldwell to Mrs Forrester, saying, " Twa young leddies wants to see Martha about the governess' situation she applied for yesterday;" and with this she drew the door close after her, and disappeared.

Mrs Forrester, presenting chairs to the young ladies, whom she did not know, politely requested them to be seated, while Martha stood by much astonished and perplexed at a visit, the purpose of which she could not guess. So great, indeed, was her agitation, that she found herself incapable of going through the ceremony of introducing them to her mother. " What can be the cause of their coming?" inquired Martha within herself. " Had John, their brother become repentant and sorry for his rudeness, and had he deputed them to make an apology; or had she heard Mrs Muckle aright, and were they really the young ladies whose friends had advertised, under the initials J. C., for a governess; and could it be possible, after the manner in which they had formerly used her, that they had come to offer her the situation. Let this be as it might, Martha was exceedingly distressed by the visit, as she was aware, that, when her mother knew who the parties were, she would be much displeased. Martha could not altogether account for the very strong dislike which her mother had expressed of the Cauldwell family.



UNEXPECTED VISITORS

That Mr Cauldwell was brother of her late landlord, was not, Martha thought, a sufficiently strong reason for such dislike, considering her mother's usually mild and gentle disposition; and she therefore concluded, that there must be something which she judged it neither prudent nor wise to attempt to penetrate, at the bottom of her mother's aversion to Advocate Cauldwell.

Martha had accordingly, on all occasions, avoided all allusion to the Cauldwell family. On the morning she left their employment, she had observed that the long conversation between Maillie and her mother had affected the latter much; and she perceived, also, that although her mother was always happy to see Maillie, her presence disagreeably reminded her of her daughter's having been in the employment of a person to whom she had the utmost aversion, and the circumstance never failed to excite and disturb her. It was the knowledge of this aversion, moreover, that had induced her to conceal from her mother the name of the person who had so rudely assaulted her; and on the present occasion, she knew not how to get the Misses Cauldwell away without alarming or exciting her beloved parent. At length, however, she arose from her seat, and laying her needlework on her little work-table, advanced towards the ladies politely, though coldly, inquiring what they might be pleased to want with her.

"We come," said Miss Maria, assuming an air of great humility and kindness, "to ask you to forget the usage you experienced from us in return for the conscientious manner in which you discharged your duties as governess to us. We were then young and foolish. We have now acquired a little more experience, and can better appreciate your value. We accordingly, with the advice of our parents, and our uncle, propose that you should again become our preceptress and governess; and if your excellent mother consents, we should like to take you to London with us this year, from whence we expect to return much improved in language, manners, and other accomplishments. Sha'nt we, Mrs Forrester?" and here the young ladies paused.

"And who, may I ask, are the young ladies who are anxious to confer such honour on my child," said Mrs Forrester.

"Step this way, ladies," exclaimed Martha, quickly opening the door of her little closet, "this way, if you please. My mother is rather unwell, and is easily agitated."

"Nay, nay, Martha," said Miss Jane, "we will not leave Mrs Forrester; she will be all the better of learning the success of your application. We are the Misses Cauldwell, ma'am," she added, addressing Mrs Forrester. "We have come to take your daughter back to live with us. She made application yesterday for our place, and ma' thinks her the best qualified candidate Better bad known, than worse unknown, you see, ma'am."

Had Mrs Forrester been able to annihilate the two young ladies by a look, that with which she now regarded them would have done the deed. She drew herself back in all the dignity of honest indignation, and the Misses Cauldwell felt themselves awed by her manner and bearing, as she exclaimed—

"Never again shall my daughter cross your father's threshold with my consent. Had I known that he was the man I now know him to be, I would sooner have begged my bread from door to door than that my daughter should have been beholden to him for employment. Your uncle got the blame of ejecting me from my cottage in the Water of Leith, and I have never known happiness since," and she burst into tears.

"My uncle is extremely sorry for that circumstance, madam," said Miss Maria. "And I have often heard him express his regret, although, at the same time, I was not aware that Martha was your daughter. Indeed, it is chiefly at my uncle's request that we have come here to-day. He is to dine at our house, and is anxious that you and Martha should join him at dinner. We may make an arrangement that will be beneficial to all parties. At the time my uncle was apparently so harsh to you, he was in great difficulties himself, and the agent to whom he intrusted your business was to blame."

"Ah!" said Mrs Forrester, "and that agent was your father, your cold-blooded father. Well do I remember his tender mercies, his insolence, his smooth-faced hypocrisy, his base and insulting conduct. Your father, Misses, was more the cause of my ejection from my cottage than your uncle. I could have managed, with the aid of friends, to have paid the rent, but a change of residence alone could have freed me from your father's importunities. Yet, why do I blame you? You have nothing to do with the matter; but your request, as regards Martha, cannot be complied with."

This answer, one would have thought, was sufficiently decisive to have caused the Misses Cauldwell to desist from any farther importunity; but these young ladies knew well that it was essential to the furtherance of their own interests that they should be successful in their present mission, and they resolved to make yet another effort to effect that desirable object. They knew that their worthy uncle was violent and self-willed, and that he would abuse them unmercifully if they did not succeed in getting Martha along with them. They knew also his disposition sufficiently, to be aware that he would spare no exertion to bring about the alliance which he had projected between their brother and Martha, although they were utterly unable to discover his motives in forwarding it. They, in fact, looked on the deed as already done, as they believed that neither Martha nor Mrs Forrester would dream of refusing such an offer; and as their future sister-in-law would, in all probability, have considerable influence over their uncle, they

thought it well to make her their friend in good time. Under the influence of these convictions, the amiable young ladies consulted for a moment together, when the eldest thus addressed Mrs Forrester—

"Madam, I think it proper to inform you, that my uncle has set his heart on a match between your daughter and my brother. Our message here is but to prepare you for a communication from himself on the subject. I think it right to mention this, for the purpose of removing the prejudices which you at present entertain against him; and I hope, ere long, to see our families bound closely together in the bands of love and friendship."

This announcement took Mrs Forrester completely by surprise. She could not believe it. What could have happened to induce old Deanhouse to act in this way, to cause such a revolution in his sentiments? They must be mocking her poverty. It could not be otherwise, and under this impression she said—

"Young ladies, it is not becoming to seek the abode of the poor for the purpose of insulting the widow and the fatherless. God knows we require your sympathy, not your mockery. Beauty, which lighted by charity, becomes an angel; when darkened by malice, becomes a fiend. We were contented in our humble obscurity; we neither sought your assistance nor your society; and again, I must repeat, it is cruel in you to obtrude on us for the purpose of insulting us."

Unable to conceal either her displeasure or disappointment, Miss Maria, tossing up her head, and turning as if to go away, replied—

"It was to serve both your daughter and yourself, madam, that we came here. We advertised for a governess, Martha applied for the situation, and, we may tell you, that the application, when read this morning, gave rise to a very unpleasant altercation in our family. My brother took your daughter's part, high words ensued between my father and him. He left the house, and came back some hours afterwards in company with my uncle, who charged us with having used Martha ill while in our employment, an allegation, which she well knows to be utterly groundless. My uncle, who rules our household with a high hand, insisted on us paying you this visit, although, we can assure you, that it was much against our wills that we came near you." Then turning round to Mrs Forrester, she continued, "But Miss Martha may be able to enlighten you farther in the matter. We believe that the whole affair is a conspiracy between her and our brother, to rob us of our lawful patrimony, by lowering us in our uncle's estimation. When young men and young women keep company at untimely hours, the sooner they are married the better for their own reputation. I have every reason to believe that Miss Martha Forrester and Mr John Cauldwell meet frequently; I know that they met last night," and here she turned her sharp malicious eye full upon Martha.

There are some seasons when worth and innocence are not able to contend, even in appearance, with confident presumption and false assertion; and it requires a discerning eye to discover the difference between the blush on the cheek of offended delicacy, and the outward symbol of conscious guilt. Thus, any one who should have looked at Martha Forrester at this particular moment, would have imagined that Miss Maria Cauldwell's assertions were true. Martha's cheeks were dyed a deep crimson, and her eyes, seeking the floor, were entirely hidden beneath her long dark eyelashes. The pulsations of her heart beat rapidly, her whole frame trembled, and she could not utter a word. The charge of having met Cauldwell on the preceding night so shocked her, that she stood motionless, and was for some time unable to reply. Her mother, after waiting as if to allow her time for explanation, exclaimed, in great agitation—

"How is this, Martha? Are you and Cauldwell in correspondence? Did you meet last night? Tell me truly, Martha, my daughter?"

Martha, recalled to herself by this appeal, stepped towards her mother, took her by the hand, raised it to her lips, and replied with perfect calmness and self-possession,—

"My dear mother, you know your Martha too well, I am sure, to believe that she can have any secret unknown to you. You cannot for a moment think that she would meet and correspond with any one without your knowledge and permission. As to meeting Mr Cauldwell last night, I have only to say, that he was the person who assaulted me beneath the archway leading to our own humble home. Knowing how averse you were to hear the family talked of, I did not mention his name to you; and for this concealment, I now ask your forgiveness."

"So, so, Widow Forrester," exclaimed Miss Maria, exultingly, delighted with the discovery she had made, and still more delighted with the confession she had heard; "so, so, this is your immaculate daughter, then. Assaulted beneath archways! Rudeness, forsooth! Would not mention the name of Cauldwell, lest you should be offended! Very fine, truly! Much offended at being spoken to by a gentleman! Ay, to be sure! Applying for governess, too; but I see it all—convenient to be under the same roof—gentle lovers! Modest, blushing, pure Martha Forrester, hustling with young men under dark archways on dark nights! Come away, sister, we shall inform uncle of all these doings, and if he persist in giving us such a sister-in-law, he is a greater fool than I take him for."

"Stay one moment, ladies, until you have heard all," said Mrs Forrester, stepping between the former and the door. "Your suspicions are as unjust as they are uncharitable. My daughter is pure and holy as any child of sin and sorrow can be. Your uncle and your father I

have long known, and sorry am I to perceive you are so like them. Your brother I feel grateful to for his manly defence of my daughter; it atones in some measure for his misconduct to her last night. Young men will do improper things sometimes, and your brother may have been in a state of excitement when he insulted my daughter. Supposing this to be the case, I forgive him, and so will Martha. But here all intercourse must end, and the greatest favour we can ask at your hands is that you forget that such persons exist." So saying, the widow lifted the latch, and opened the door. The young ladies, tossing their heads, and adjusting their dresses, were just departing, when Maillie, wrapped up in her little bonnet and cloak, all drizzled through with wet, and followed by the miller and his companions, entered the apartment, and without noticing the two Misses Cauldwell, who had started back as if afraid of being contaminated by coming into contact with such a mass of vulgarity, exclaimed, "Come awa, miller Flemyng; come awa, Mathew Waldie; come awa, Mark Sprot. Here's Widow and Martha Forrester for you now. What think ye o' them? But what's this o't?" she continued, turning to the other young ladies; "Misses Cauldwell, what are ye wantin' here? Are ye seekin' me?"

"No," answered Miss Maria, "but it is as well we have met you. We can now perceive the full extent of the conspiracy that has been formed to rob us of our rights; to find you, Maillie, who have been so long dependant on our family, combining with this young woman here and our thoughtless brother, to ruin two innocent and defenceless females; to find you lending a helping hand to marry our brother into a low family—shame! shame! Maillie!"

"Your brother marry Martha Forrester!" said the miller, who had been gazing with intense delight at the beautiful countenance of the widow's daughter. "Heaven forbid that ony puir skin bleached scribe should ever come near her. Low family, my word! Look at her whaur she stands there, and place yoursells beside her gin ye daur. She has been brought up in poverty, it's true, but she will ken a' the better how to mak a gude use o' the fortune that Providence has now sent her. Widow Forrester, what way hae ye no been doun at Deanhaugh before this time. Has that letter that I sent you turned your head an' made ye sae proud that ye hae forgotten your auld acquaintances?"

"Nae fear o' that; see gin night," muttered Waldie.

"Beautiful Martha! What an angel!" exclaimed Sprott, evidently contemplating a new poem.

"What letter mean you, Miller Flemyng?" exclaimed the widow.

"A letter, widow, which, as I didna ken your address, and was unable to find out whaur ye stayed, I sent to lie in the Edinburgh Post-Office window, an' I understand ye called and got it."

"Alas! no," exclaimed the widow; "I have not got the letter.

Martha saw it in the window, but happened to have no money with her to pay for it, and by the time it was again called for, we were informed it had been returned to the person who sent it."

"The deil o' that it has," said the miller; "it ne'er cam back to me. But the Misses Cauldwell wad likely be telling you o' your gude fortune. Their uncle kens weel enough a' about it, and he was up ca'ing on his brother this morning. Did he no tell you, leddies," he continued, turning to the Misses Cauldwell, "of the widow's good fortune?"

"Good fortune! What good fortune?" exclaimed the latter, in great surprise.

"Is that a' ye ken about it?" said the miller; and he proceeded to relate all the particulars of the stranger's visit, and presenting the twenty guineas sent by the latter to the widow, wished her joy of the earnest they presented of her future good fortune. The widow made no reply; her feelings had overcome her. Indeed, all present were affected; even Miss Maria Cauldwell professed to be deeply interested, as, in a low undertone, she thus broke silence,—

"My uncle said nothing of any such thing having occurred, but desired my sister and I to come here and engage Martha as our governess. He further hinted, that we might expect to see her soon our sister-in-law. We are now much delighted with our brother's choice, and admire his disinterestedness, as he could know nothing of Miss Forrester's good fortune this morning, when he advocated her cause so boldly. He had not conversed with my uncle for years; but he waited on him this morning to solicit his protection, having been banished our house by my father, for taking Miss Forrester's part."

"Aye, and it was by my advice," interposed Maillie, "that the poor lad sought his uncle's protection. Your uncle may have selfish motives in bringing about this match, but your brother seems to be actuated by a pure and honourable regard."

"No vera sure; see gin night," grumbled Waldie.

"Maillie," said the miller, "ye were aye a peacemaker a' your days, and are gey sair bowed doun wi' bearin' other folks burdens. However, we maunna be ower sair on the young man. But what says Martha? What says Mrs Forrester?"

"My daughter's hand is not mine to give," said Mrs Forrester; "and although I feel grateful for his disinterested kindness, I never wish to have him for a relative."

Martha blushed deeply, but said nothing. She might perhaps have overlooked some of John Cauldwell's former misdemeanours, and felt grateful to him for having suffered for her sake; but the image of Philip Lauder was too deeply fixed in her mind to be ever supplanted by that of John Cauldwell; and at this moment, by a rather strange coincidence Philip Lauder entered the apartment.

CHAPTER VIII.

Though ye tether time an' tide,
Love an' light winna hide.
Old Proverb.

N Philip Lauder entering Mrs Forrester's apartment, as mentioned at the conclusion of the preceding chapter, he was received by her with great cordiality. Martha, also, her lovely face suffused with blushes, stepped modestly forward, and proffered her little white hand to her deliverer, with such an air of tenderness and confusion, that even Halbert Flemyng, honest man, who seldom paid any attention to such matters, could not help perceiving that Martha and Philip were attached to each other, and the discovery delighted and gladdened the heart of the worthy miller.

Is it not strange that love should be so wayward? Strange that the impulses and feelings he implants in the human breast, should discover to others the existence of a passion, of which the lovers themselves are yet unconscious? Strange, that when the victims of unavowed love are mutually suffering from those fluctuations of hope and fear, inseparable from a pure and ardent affection, the dispassionate onlooker should at once perceive, from the blushes and glances exchanged between the fond pair, that their thoughts run in one channel; that their hearts are knit together; that he should feel satisfied, of what they themselves cannot be assured, that their love is reciprocal?

Flemyng knew Lauder intimately, and was rather surprised to meet him at the widow's; but pleased with the discovery he had just made, as to the state of the affections of the young pair, he stepped up to him with smiling countenance, and extending towards him his enormous palm, exclaimed—

"What, Philip, are ye kenned here too, lad? I had no idea that my friend Mrs Forrester and you were acquainted."

"We are but acquaintances of a day, Mr Flemyng," modestly answered the young man. "I had the honour of meeting Mrs Forrester for the first time yesterday, and called just now merely to inquire after

her health, and that of Miss Forrester, who was rudely attacked last night by a ruffian at the very threshold of her own door, as I may say. I hope Madam," he continued, turning to Martha, while his glowing countenance expressed much more eloquently and earnestly than his language, the interest he felt in the question, " I trust you have recovered from your alarm, and are now quite well ?"

" Quite well, I thank you, sir," stammered Martha. " To you I am deeply indebted," she added, gazing earnestly on her deliverer, and then blushing deeply as her eyes fell to the ground, she repeated the latter part of the last sentence in under tones, that seemed to have been heaved up from the depths of her grateful bosom.

" Yes," interrupted Mrs Forrester, " to you, sir, we are much indebted, indeed. My friends," she added, turning to the Miller and his companions, " this young man, yesterday, rescued my daughter from the insolence of Mr John Cauldwell."

" What a glorious subject for a poem, Philip rescuing Martha. I'll tak a swatch o't," whispered Sprot to Waldie. " I'll hae't in rhyme afore morning."

" See gin night," muttered Waldie.

" Can this be true," inquired Maillie, in the utmost amazement. " Did John conduct himself to Martha in a rude or improper manner ?"

" A falsehood ! a downright falsehood !" exclaimed the Misses Cauldwell together.

" Shame ! Misses, shame !" said the Miller ; " such words do not fall smoothly from fair lips. It may be natural that you should take the part of your brother, and such sisterly affection is at all times commendable. But, my dears," he continued in a milder tone of voice, " you must not consider your brother infallible. The warmth of your feelings may be some apology for the hasty expression you used just now, but I would advise you to be more guarded in future." So saying, and without allowing them time to answer, he turned round, and gazing with delighted looks, first on Martha, and then on Philip, exclaimed, " Ay, man, Philip, and ye have now turned the champion of young leddies, hae ye ? Fegs ye are a bauld birkie. 'Od, Mrs Forrester, your daughter couldna have met wi' a mair able defender. He's sterling metal through and through. Is he no, Waldie ?"

" True as steel, rings like an anvil," said the smith.

" Right, Waldie, right," resumed the miller. " He's a true man, and that's better than a rich ane, although he'll be rich by an' bye, or I'll be disappointed. I have been advising him to commence business down aside us yonder, in your gudeman's auld warkshop, Mrs Forrester ; its empty e'ennow. It belongs to your uncle, Misses ; ye maun

speak a word for Phillip here. Tell Deanhouse he'll be a gude tenant, and ne'er let on about the row wi' your brother; young men will be foolish, and their fauts maun be whiles owerlookit; so be ye peace-makers, my dawties, and I'll speak a gude word for you to somebody."

The Misses Cauldwell tossed their heads aloft, as if half offended by the familiarity of the miller; but remembering the positive injunctions of their uncle, that they should bring Martha Forrester along with them, they talked apart for an instant, when Miss Maria exclaimed, "We have at present little influence with our uncle, and can promise nothing on that ground. Our business here is to invite Martha, at his special request, to meet him at dinner, at our house to-day. Should she accept the invitation, she might herself have an opportunity of soliciting his favour for her deliverer."

"Ladies, and Mr Flemyng, I pray you stop," exclaimed Lauder, with deep emotion. "There is no use for any one interfering in the matter. I took the workshop from Mr Cauldwell yesterday."

"Indeed! Ah! that was cutting before the point," said the miller. Cheap, I hope, cheap. New beginners canna pay lang rents."

"I daresay the rent is moderate on the whole," replied Lauder, but I have been obliged to take along with the workshop the cottage and garden, which I have no use for in the meantime."

"No, but you may soon," said the miller. "You may marry, you know, and all young men who wish to prosper in business, should have their houses close to their shops. We will look out for a wife for you amongst the blooming lasses by the waterside yonder. Ken ye ony that will fit him, Sprot or Waldie?"

"Ay, half-a-dozen," exclaimed the tailor.

"See gin night," said the smith.

During these remarks the Misses Cauldwell observed, with unspeakable vexation, that both Martha and Philip looked confused and excited. Recovering himself, however, almost instantly, the latter said, with as much indifference as he could assume—

"I cannot yet afford to keep a wife; and, indeed, could not have promised to pay so heavy a rent as I have engaged for, but Mr Cauldwell was kind, very kind, and said, that he would take the whole amount out in work, so I thought that in that shape it would be easily paid."

"No sae easy as ye think, lad," here struck in Waldie; "ye'd better pay him in hard cash. The laird likes gude bargains when he taks wark in payment. The double aye, at the least. But, see gin night."

"Be done wi' your croakin' and evil bodin' Waldie," said the miller. "The laird can do a generous thing when he likes. At the warst

we'll no see ye beat Philip. 'Od, Mrs Forrester, a sudden thought strikes me, wad ye no be mair comfortable yoursell in your auld cottage; and wad your friend no be better pleased when he comes hame to find ye there, rather than in this close confined neighbourhood? Ye might tak the biggin' frae Philip, an' thus lighten the young man's hand a wee. He has done ye a gude turn, an' 'ae gude turn deserves anither.' Nane o' the Edinburgh gutterbloods wad daur to come there to insult ye, Martha. And if they did, Philip wad aye be in the way to protect ye." And here the honest miller gave Martha a very knowing look, then continued, "and a manly protector he is. Is he not, Martha? And the callant took to his heels, did he?" added the miller," reverting to the circumstance of the assault on Martha. "Ha, ha, ha! 'Od, I wad liket to hae seen the birkie birrin' up the street;" and here the miller burst into one of those hearty laughs in which he was in the habit of indulging. "Puir thing, I hope ye didna hurt him?" he added, when he found breath enough to speak.

"He ran away," replied Lauder, smiling, "while I was supporting the young lady, and seemed more frightened than hurt. Besides, miller," he added, with a laugh, "you know my fist is not nearly so large as yours."

"Nor so heavy as Waldie's," said the miller. "My dears," he continued to Misses Cauldwell, "ye must keep your brother at hame, for gin he comes down yonder about, trying ony o' his Embro' pranks, he'll get a skinfu' o' broken banes to bring hame. Will he no, Waldie?"

"Ay, or may I ne'er handle bellows again," replied the honest smith, grinning, and showing his teeth. "But, see gin night. Auld Drawwell deep—young Drawwell deeper. Douk them in the Cauldrin; cool their shanks. Keep them at arm's length;—cowards canna be trusted in short grips—dinna strike fair—no canny. Time coming. See gin night."

The worthy smith's manners were too plain and too homely for the gentle Misses Cauldwell to endure; so hastily arranging their dresses, they prepared to leave the house. But before doing so, Miss Jane turned round, in a state of great excitement, and thus addressed Martha—

"And is this, madam, the return you make for the kindness shewn you by our family? Is this the answer to the generous offer we were commissioned to make you? Are these the sort of tenants my uncle has, who talk of their superiors in such terms? And you, madam, you pinkfaced huzzy, laying snares to entrap my poor, dear, simple brother's kind and unsuspecting heart, holding out encouragement for him to forsake the paths of rectitude, and then trumping up a story about his

assaulting you, All this I firmly believe you have done, for the purpose either of extracting money from us, or forcing him to marry you. And that is your deliverer, is he?" pointing to Philip. "Really, I must say, a very heroic looking personage he is. Fustian jackets and rouged cheeks suit each other admirably. But we will be revenged. We will expose you. Fie on't! and fie on our foolish uncle, that he should have forced us to demean ourselves so far as to hold conversation with such trash. Let us away, sister;" and having pushed the latter before her, she slammed the door violently behind her, and proceeded to descend the stair, muttering vengeance against the unoffending widow, and her no less unoffending daughter.

When the amiable, accomplished, and ill-used Misses Cauldwell arrived at home, they found their uncle, their father, mother, and brother together, and all apparently on the best terms with each other. They seemed very impatient to learn the result of the mission on which the young ladies had been dispatched, and almost in one breath inquired how they had been received by Martha's mother, and if Martha might be expected to dinner.

"Dinner!" exclaimed Miss Jane, indignantly, "goodness forbid that such an ungrateful wretch should ever cross the threshold of our door, in any other capacity than that of a beggar. Dinner, indeed!" and here the young lady looked unutterable things, and bursting out of the room without further explanation, ran off to her own apartment, dissolved in a flood of tears.

Miss Maria, who was on the whole of rather cooler temperament than Jane, proceeded to paint a highly coloured picture of the unkind treatment they had been subjected to in their visit to Widow Forrester's. She then repeated all that had been said by the latter and the smith against her uncle, taking care to make such additions as she considered adapted to excite the old man's utmost displeasure. She also insinuated that Maillie, their ancient serving woman, formed one of a party, which had apparently been formed for the purpose of ruining the characters of the Cauldwell family, and, as a proof of this, Miss Maria declared that Maillie had stood by without uttering a syllable in defence of their dear uncle's character, while it was being attacked by Waldie. Maillie's conduct in having remained behind them after they had been so rudely insulted, furnished good ground for further declamation. "Were I you, mamma," the amiable young lady continued, "I would not allow her to claim your house any longer as a home, ungrateful old woman," and here Miss Maria sunk down in a chair quite exhausted.

Old Mr Archibald Cauldwell, however, was not easily convinced of

any thing being true that he did not wish to believe. He was, as has been formerly said, of a suspicious nature, and on this occasion attributed the want of success to the unwillingness which the young ladies had shewn to set off on their mission. He believed that they had designedly insulted the widow, and exasperated Waldie, and, by their rudeness, had made Maillie ashamed to defend them. He could not, however, account for Maillie entering the widow's cottage along with the miller and party, until Mrs Cauldwell told him that Maillie had asked leave of absence that forenoon, for the purpose of soliciting him to interfere in reconciling her dear son with his father, who had been somewhat severe with him in the morning. Old Drawwell soon comprehended how his old nurse, on missing him, had, either by design or accident, met with the miller, who, knowing her to be an old acquaintance of Mrs Forrester's, would naturally inquire if she knew the widow's place of residence. Maillie had, of course, conducted the miller there, and thus in a twinkling, the whole matter was clear to the keen eye of Mr Archibald Cauldwell. The result of this train of thought was the worthy old gentleman's attributing the whole blame of the failure of the young ladies' mission to their own arrogance. Under this impression, he began to abuse them, calling them every hard name he could think of. He then began to write a note to Mrs Forrester, inviting her and her daughter to dinner; and it was not until Maria had repeated several of Waldie's expressions, which he knew to be peculiar to the honest smith, that old Deanhouse became convinced that his Water of Leith neighbours had been making too free with his character. Assured of this, he dashed down his pen, and tearing the half-written note, began pouring out a whole torrent of invective against the miller and his companions.

"Beasts! Ungrateful scoundrels!" he exclaimed. "There's not a family in the village that does not subsist chiefly through my means, and behold my reward. But I'll have my revenge. I'll ruin the rascals. I'll bring an opposition smith and an opposition miller among them. Deanhaugh has had too much grist to his mill. He is becoming a greater man in the village than I am. But what said the young man?" he asked. "Jack," he continued, "a rival here, eh? He who has taken the millwright's shop and the cottage. Did he join the others in reviling me, eh?"

Miss Maria was obliged to confess that the young man had talked of her uncle in very respectful terms; nay, she even went farther, for Lauder had found some little favour in her eyes, she said that he had gratefully acknowledged Deanhouse's kindness in promising to employ him. To be sure, he had talked of her brother rather disrespectfully,

but then the young men were rivals, and that circumstance might be an apology for his expressing himself in so unbecoming a manner on that particular subject."

"Ay, ay, my dear," said old Drawwell, "rivals, eh? Not afraid of a millwright rival, Jack, eh?"

"I should think not," said Jack, turning round, contemplating himself in the mirror, and shading back his locks; "I should think not, poor fellow."

"Yes, poor fellow," repeated his uncle. "I am glad to learn that gratitude has not quite left the earth; that there is still some little virtue extant. I shall look after the young man; shall give him the new mill to build at Crooknook,—he'll do it cheap. Get young mason and he to go halvers; advance them money from new banking-house of Messrs Chance, Snacks & Co.—shareholders there, brother; we can withhold support when they get half way, if they get behind. Gives them a chance of getting on; keeps us safe. Best to be wary, eh, brother?"

"Much need in these times," said the cool, calculating lawyer Cauldwell, "when there are so many bubbles afloat. A man does'nt know when he is safe."

"Hope you are watching matters sharply in new bank," exclaimed Deanhouse. "Chance, Snacks & Co. sharp fellows, but better for being looked after; all men are, eh? Good securities, mortgages, first bonds, ground feus, all clear, eh?"

"In the large building speculation, brother," answered the lawyer, "in which so much of our money is sunk, I have taken especial care to proceed cautiously and warily. And, now, that the unpleasant difference which has too long kept us asunder is happily at an end, I am prepared to shew you that I have neither been unmindful of your interest nor of your advice. Babel Row is now rising proudly and rapidly, and in a few years will yield cent. per cent. at the least; but in the meantime, anent this young man, he is to be your tenant. By giving him this job, you will bind him to your interest. He will have a little capital, of course, to commence with?"

"Perhaps he may have a little," replied Mr Cauldwell's elder brother.

"Every little helps," resumed his considerate brother. "Recommend him to deposit in our bank. Always some little security; if he fails, saves us; if he succeeds, he becomes a customer. You will, of course, let him the work on contract; take in a few other offers from some reasonable parties, and give the work to the lowest."

"No, no, brother," replied the elder Cauldwell. "I will show my young friend the lowest offer, and make him do it a trifle less. Young

man, the mason already engaged. So the two will get on capitally together. Bind them mutually and severally. But what say you, Jack? Afraid of losing Martha, eh? Egad, if, as your sister says, the widow is to take the cottage from him, they will be nigh neighbours, eh?"

"Indeed, uncle," said Jack, "I do think you are not acting according to your usual prudence in this matter? Why not keep the fellow out of the workshop altogether, and make the widow an offer of the cottage free. It would secure you her gratitude, and that of her relative when he comes home. And——"

"You could call occasionally and see Martha," interrupted old Cauldwell. Ah, ha! See I know your thoughts. My own feelings, lad, my own exactly; but won't do. Shop taken; can't keep Lauder out. Besides, if we could—too barefaced, not right. Give him fair play; better in my hands than another. Don't be alarmed; shall find opportunities enough, for you must have Martha, eh, Jack?"

"Ah, but," suggested Jack, with a sigh, "will this, which the miller is labouring to bring about, not prove a bar to my hopes? Will not this rude artizan and Martha be too near each other. He might win her by his cozening manner, while my plain dealing would have no chance."

"Fie on't! Jack, fie!" exclaimed Deanhouse, "a Cauldwell, and afraid! Push your suit boldly, man, and fear nothing. Women all like bold lovers. I shall find ways and means to make both the widow and her foster brother-in-law your friends; if you can't win Martha, you ought not to wear her. Must have her, though. Capital catch for Jack, eh brother? Good girl, eh sister? Dinner ready, eh? Sharp set. Come now, bustle, bustle, little time; want away soon. How's your claret-cellar, brother? Must crack a brace of bottles together before we part. Drink success to all our undertakings, eh? Allow me, my dear sister;" so saying the old bachelor led his sister into the dining-room, where, with eating and drinking, and dreaming and talking of new bank stocks, new building schemes, and many other excellent plans for the advancement of their own interests, this worthy and interesting family spent a very pleasant evening.

The party at Mrs Forrester's, after the departure of the Misses Cauldwell, entered into a very animated conversation. Old Maillie, of course, put the best face she could on the matter, and craved the indulgence of the company for the rudeness of the young ladies, who, she said, had little or no experience of the world; and, consequently, were apt to overrate their own importance. The uncle, she said, was certainly a selfish man, but had some good points about him.

"As for young John, she could assure them that they would have been delighted with the manly way in which he had taken Martha's

part that morning. He was," she said, "a little given to company, and might have, in the height of his admiration, conducted himself rudely to Martha, under the influence of some strong excitement; but the honourable manner in which he had avowed his passion, even at the risk of losing his father's favour, while it was impossible he could know any thing of Miss Forrester's prospects, proved his love to be sincere, and altogether free from selfish or pecuniary motives; and she trusted they would all become good friends in due time."

The miller followed up his suggestion, relative to Mrs Forrester taking the cottage from Lauder; and, in a short time, matters were arranged to the satisfaction of all parties. It was agreed that, so soon as the cottage could be got ready for the widow's reception, she was to be removed there. The miller was to send his cart for her furniture, and Sprot and Waldie were to assist in packing, loading, and unloading the cart. Two hours were spent under the widow's roof, after which, Flemyng, Lauder, Waldie and Sprot set off, in the dusk of the evening to inspect the premises, and completed the business of the day by a long sederunt in the public-house that Waldie patronized, where the three friends were so very witty at Lauder's expense, and said so many fine things of him and Martha, that the young man went home and retired to bed, to dream not of money-bags, but of beautiful, charming Martha Forrester, and the pretty little cottage on the banks of the Water of Leith.

It was about eight days after that on which the various occurrences took place which have just been recorded, and on one of those clear, mild winter mornings which, but for the late hour at which the sun rises, might have been taken for a spring or even a summer dawn, that a number of the early risers about the head of the Canongate were assembled to gaze on what appeared to them quite a phenomenon in nature. This novelty was neither more nor less than our friend Coal Jock, altogether metamorphosed. His face had undergone sundry ablutions, and had fairly changed colour. Whether from the delight which John's countenance felt at meeting the open air freed from its dusty coating, or from its owner's naturally bashful disposition, that countenance looked amazingly rosy, fresh, and youthful. A lavish display of snow white linen was exhibited in broad folds over his red kerchief. A shining new blue coat, with large metal buttons, was finely relieved by a red plush waistcoat; and by the aid of these spicy articles of clothing, together with a pair of corduroy inexpressibles, and their never-failing accompaniments, the blue-ribbed stockings, Coal Jock looked as if he had altogether changed his nature. He had, at any rate, apparently changed his calling, for his steed, and his cart, and his whole appurtenances were new, and in entire keeping with the new character which

their owner had assumed. Jock's steed was a jolly, well-fed, dappled grey, with a strong, thick, gracefully curved neck, a broad back, jammed in between the shafts of the cart, a sleeky black mane, and a sweeping, long black tail. The gallant grey was arrayed in fine new jet black harness, relieved by sundry polished brass buckles and stars, together with some slashes of staring scarlet, apparently more for ornament than use. The cart was large and roomy, the body painted of a deep sky blue colour, and the wheels glowing with a red remarkable for its fiery brilliancy.

Thus metamorphosed, Jock and his cart formed a subject of interesting speculation to the denizens of Canongate. Many of them knew him intimately, and knew that he never could have saved wherewithal to purchase such a turn out. They, therefore, naturally concluded that he was either indebted to some kind friend, or had been appointed to some new and important situation; and they were so far right. The cart and horse belonged to Flemyng, who had also furnished John with the new dress, which he wore on this interesting occasion. The poor fellow had been most anxious to discover the residence of Widow Forrester, and had frequently trudged down to Deanhaugh mill, to report the unsuccessful result of his inquiries. Hence, although the widow had not been discovered through his agency, he had evinced so warm an interest in the matter, that the miller resolved on employing him to convey her back to her native village in her hour of triumph—he having conveyed her thence in the days of her poverty.

And deeply impressed was honest John with the honour and importance of the charge committed to him. He hummed, and he whistled, now a snatch of a street song now a fragment of a rustic air. He chicked his lips; he cracked his whip; he winked with a knowing leer; he ran down the alley and up the stair, then down the stair and up the alley; he lifted huge bundles in his arms; he carried heavy loads on his back, and swung them into the cart as if they were nothing. He sprang on his curricle, now roping one corner, now racking another, now tickling with the rope end, or menacing with the rack-pin, the mischievous little urchins who flocked around him, heedless of his violent gestures and antic grimaces. They crowded the pavement, laughing at his manœuvres, as he took off his new broad brimmed castor, wiped his brow, gazed delighted at the spicy article, and again thrust it on his sconce, with a jaunty and knowing air, which he finished off by assuming an imposing attitude, thrusting his hands into his ribs, and eyeing the youngsters with a look which said, as plain as look could say it, "Look at me."

At length, after all the homely and somewhat ancient furniture had been carefully packed on the cart, John unslung his whip from his shoulders, flourished it in the air, seized the reins, and pronouncing his

favourite "Gee hup," in an elevated tone, the gallant grey, who appeared no less proud and happy than his driver, reared his head, pushed his left shoulder forward, and tore away up the steep Canongate, followed by scores of excited and mischievous little urchins.

The parting with Mrs Forrester and her daughter had been looked forward to by the ancient stairhead fraternity with feelings of no ordinary kind. On the evening previous to the morning appointed for the widow's departure, there was a tea-party in Mrs Muckle's. The miller was there, and I am not sure but the young millwright was there also. The ladies had taken leave of each other on that occasion, under the impression that they might not meet again for some little time. Mrs Forrester was to remove early in the morning, and the ancient sisterhood did not expect to be out of bed at such an early hour. Notwithstanding this arrangement, however, when morning came, all the old dames were seen stirring about. Coal Jock's heavy footstep heard on the stairhead had awakened them, and there they were bustling about in their flannel caps and gowns, each more anxious than another to render assistance, while the honour of entertaining the widow and her daughter to breakfast was eagerly claimed and as eagerly disputed. At length, Martha, by way of preventing any little jealousy which an apparent preference might have excited, proposed, as a penalty on the deaf old lady, who had not made her appearance among the others, that they should all adjourn to her chamber, and breakfast there. The old lady was much pleased with this touching proof of Martha's grateful remembrance, and said, as she busied herself in setting forth her choicest china,—

"Ay, ay, lassie, an' ye're gaun awa to become a fine leddy? Did I no prophesy that ye wad see day about wi' Jenny Cauldwell yet?"

Having breakfasted, the old ladies grew eloquent. The fountains of their kindest and warmest sympathies were opened, and burst forth in full streams of aspirations for the welfare of their dear Martha Forrester. They extracted from her a hundred promises to visit them soon. They sobbed, they smiled, they wept, they chuckled, they were at once grave and merry; and when at length Philip Lauder, who had assisted and superintended the operation of packing the furniture, came up to say that all was ready, was he not flushed? Was he not excited? Did he not envy these old dames the gentle kisses Martha imprinted on their aged lips, in return for the "God bless you's," which they poured forth so plentifully on her. At length, the sound of the cart moving away, gave notice that the time of departure had come. The widow and her daughter followed, leaning for support (and they required it) on the arm of Philip Lauder.

In this manner, the party reached the village of the Water of Leith,

One little incident, however, occurred on the way which excited Martha's apprehension, and gave her some cause for uneasiness. In passing along the North Bridge, she observed, standing on the opposite side of the way, the same person who had been so rude to her at the Post-Office. When they reached the end of the Bridge, she almost sunk with terror, as her elbow was rudely jostled by the same individual, who, fixing a deliberate scowl on Lauder, passed on and joined another young man, in whom Martha recognised one for whom she entertained still greater horror, namely, Mr John Cauldwell.

What a crowd of old recollections thronged upon Mrs Forrester's memory, when she again entered within the door of her dear little cottage! What a host of old associations were conjured up by every thing around! What a melancholy pleasure had she in gazing on every feature and exploring every corner of that dwelling in which she had spent by far the happiest portion of her life. There was the hearth by which her husband was wont to sit reading to her and her infant daughter after nightfall. There the little room which he used to take such delight in decorating with ornaments of his own making. By the porchway still stood the stone-settle where old grandmother used to sit sunning herself in the summer forenoons. The little garden, too, extending to the water-edge, with its patches of vegetables, its plot of grass, and its row of berry bushes, all recalled to her memory the image of her dear husband. Wherever she turned she saw something or other which called up a touching reminiscence of him. Her own grief, helplessness, and ejection, came all up before her mind's eye, and so oppressed her, that she leant on her daughter, and burst into tears.

Flemyng, Waldie, and Sprot, who were waiting Mrs Forrester's arrival, now left our friends Philip Lauder and Coal Jock to get the furniture safely unloaded, and set off, taking Mrs and Martha Forrester with them to Mark's house, where his kind helpmate received the "twa leddies" with marked deference, and paid them the most respectful attentions. Afterwards, the miller and his followers went away to assist in putting the cottage in order, leaving the "twa leddies" with Mrs Sprot, who was in great perplexity how to entertain them. She was afraid they might deem her assuming if she affected familiarity; and it was not until Mrs Forrester had the youngest child on her knee, and Martha was romping and laughing with the son and heir, who was a very striking miniature representative of his little father, that the happy little mother fully opened up her heart to her respected visitors. Of course, the transcendent poetical genius of her better half was the theme of her discourse, and by way of proving to the satisfaction of the ladies that her eloginm were well merited, she caused the young Sprot to recite one of his father's nursery ballads, which he did, so effectually imi-

tating his esteemed parent, that, but for his juvenile jacket and buttoned over trowsers, you would have thought the piece was being recited by the bard himself.

THE ABSENT FATHER.

"O, mother, what taks my dear father awa,
When muir an' when mountain are heapit wi' snaw;
When thick swirlin' drift dauds the dead sapless earth,
An' a' thing is drear save our wee cozy hearth?"

"The young hillside lammies wad die wi' the cauld,
Wer't no for your father wha leads them a-fauld;
His voice is weel kenned by ilk puir mither ewe,
He's saving their lives while he's toiling for you."

"Gin e'er I'm man muckle, an' puir father spared,
I'll mak ye a leddy, an' father a laird;
I'll brave the dour winter on mountain an' lea,
An' toil for ye baith, wha hae toiled sae for me."

"Come lay your wee head on your ain minnie's knee,
An' gaze in her face wi' your ain father's ee;
The night settles down, O! I wish he were here,
Hark! is nae that Collie's wowff? Aiblins they're near."

The door gets a dirl, an' flees back to the wa',
'Tis him, see his blue bonnet wawffs aff the snaw;
"I'm here my sweet son, an' my couthie wee dame,
Down, Collie, be thankfu' we're a' now at hame."

After little Sprot and his recitation had been sufficiently applauded, Mrs Sprot talked in rapture of the delight it afforded her to perceive that "the leddies" were so well qualified to appreciate the wonderful poetic genius of her husband, and she talked away so fluently and pleasantly, that her visitors, whose spirits had been somewhat depressed, were quickly enlivened by the amusing garrulity of their hostess. By and bye the miller returned, and having informed them that the cottage was now in tolerable order, conducted them thither, when the whole party sat down to a very neat though homely dinner, which Flemyng had ordered from the village baker. Two or three old residenters, former acquaintances of Mrs Forrester, were also invited, and

the whole party spent so pleasant an afternoon, that the widow assured her kind friends that she had not enjoyed so much happiness since that melancholy day on which she had left the cottage, to which she was now so happily restored.

In a short time Mrs Forrester was comfortably settled in her little domicile, and Philip Lauder in his workshop. The young man was an excellent workman, and as his sign-board, painted by his own hand, announced, he combined the trades of a house-carpenter and millwright. He was thus a great acquisition to the village, and the consequence was, that work flowed in upon him from all quarters. His connection, too, with Mrs Forrester, and the circumstance of his rescuing Martha, which was soon rumoured abroad, invested his character with a degree of romance, and interested the primitive villagers much in his favour. Moreover, the more shrewd observers amongst them remarked, that Martha and Philip were much together, and that whenever Martha had a message out after nightfall, the former seemed, as if by chance, always to come in the way. On such occasions they might be seen diverging from the common thoroughfares, and discovering delightful pathways amid the woods and by the still waters, although such pathways frequently led in any other direction rather than that in which they ought to have been going, and were frequented only by lovers, silent and eloquent like themselves. On Sundays, Philip uniformly accompanied Martha and her mother to church; and if there was to be an evening sermon, Philip was always sure to hear of it beforehand, and Martha and he were as certain to repair there together. Notwithstanding the close intimacy, and the pure and ardent attachment which existed between Martha and Philip, not a word of love ever passed between them. Their intercourse, however, became more and more close, more dear, more tender, and they continued to enjoy each other's society happy in unavowed attachment, rich in unprofessed love.

CHAPTER IX.

Greed is Envy's auldest brither ;
Scraggy wark they mak thegither.
Old Proverb.

Some weeks after Mrs Forrester had been settled in her cottage, old Mr Archibald Cauldwell was seen one forenoon issuing from the back door of his garden policy, which skirted the stream, and hobbling down to Deanhaugh Mill. He had been confined with rheumatic gout for some time previously, and had not therefore been in the village since Mrs Forrester's return. He had, however, the most perfect knowledge of every movement in that locality, being in the practice of dispatching every day to the little township his barefooted serving maid, who duly reported to him the substance of all she heard or saw. This sort of intercourse was necessarily held with the lowest and most vulgar of the village gossips. Several of these old ladies, like Cauldwell himself, were both jealous and envious of Mrs Forrester's reported good fortune, and at first had been exceedingly loathe to believe in the truth of Flemyng's statement, or to admit the likelihood of the stranger's return. Even after the twenty guineas had come to hand they had continued sceptical ; and now, that so long a period of time had elapsed and he had not appeared, they declared it to be their firm conviction, that he would never more be seen or heard of. These opinions were strengthened by several circumstances. The British army had now entirely left Holland. Several sailors and soldiers, who had been born in the locality, had either come home on leave of absence, or in consequence of having received their discharge, and yet there was no word of the widow's friend. What had become of him ?

The comments and remarks of the old crones on this subject were uniformly carried to the laird's ear by his glib-tongued little messenger, and added to his own notions, induced him to believe that Mrs Forrester's friend had either lost his life during the unfortunate retreat through Holland that winter, where so many brave British soldiers had perished, or that he had, on returning to the Continent, again forgotten his native village and his brother's widow. Reasoning thus, the old man thought it would be safer to delay offering Mrs Forrester any assistance until he could ascertain whether or not such assistance was likely to be compensated ; and one of his motives for visiting

Deanhaugh Mill just now was to sift the miller, and ascertain what he thought or knew of the matter.

Flemyng, who was busily engaged at work when the laird appeared, invited him to sit down near him, on one of the huge beams that supported the machinery, Deanhaugh himself, covered with flour, continuing to place empty sack after empty sack at the funnel to get filled, and when so filled, lifting them up with the greatest ease, and attaching them to the chain, by which they were hoisted into the floor above.

After a few preliminary observations, in which the state of the weather, the crops, and the laird's health, formed prominent points, Cauldwell introduced the subject in which he was most warmly interested.

"By the bye, miller," he said, "how does Widow Forrester get on now? No word of her friend yet, eh? Time up; all British troops home from Holland; maybe dead. Know you his name, eh?"

"No laird," replied Deanhaugh, "I really dinna ken what name he might assume there, very likely Forrester, but I'm no sure."

"Pity that!" exclaimed Cauldwell. "If dead, you know, neither widow nor girl any claim, eh? Don't know who to ask for; besides no relations; nothing to do with his wealth. A foundling, go to government. Bad case, Deanhaugh; you keeping them too. Twenty pounds must be expended; hard on you, expensive, eh?"

"Ne'er you mind that, Deanhouse," answered the miller; "when they come to you askin' your assistance, come you and tell me, and I'll caution ye they winna come back to ye."

"Don't be alarmed, miller!" exclaimed Deanhouse. "Daresay he'll come by and bye. Hope he's alive. But when he does come, won't be pleased. That jobbing carpenter no match for the heiress of the high-minded veteran. Recollect letter; charges you not to let her fall into low hands; wishes her to marry respectably."

"A fig for his wishes," retorted Deanhaugh. "Whaur could he find a better match for his charming niece, accomplished and beautiful, and amiable as she is, than honest, manly, brave Philip Lauder. He'll no be lang o' warstling up the hill. He has baith energy and industry, and I wad like naething better than to see the twa bairns united. They seem formed for each other."

"You will never see them united, miller, you may rely on't!" exclaimed Deanhouse. "The uncle won't allow it. If he be a wealthy man, as apparently he is, he will naturally wish to elevate the family whom he now means to patronize. My nephew a splendid match for Martha. Give him Deanhouse for dowry, eh? Lauder can't touch that, eh? If old fellow has plenty of cash I will match him. We will

manage the matter bravely. Jack desperately in love with Martha, too; they will suit each other nicely."

"Hope it not, Deanhouse—hope it not," replied the miller energetically; "your nephew can never pretend to such a hand as that of Martha Forrester. Allowing the lad to have some good qualities, yet his general habits and tastes are so diametrically opposed to hers, that they never could be happy together. Besides, you are aware, that he has been guilty of such indiscretions towards Martha, as no pure-minded girl can ever remember but with grief and indignation."

"Pooh, nonsense, man," said Cauldwell, "she won't remember it with any such feelings. She will ascribe it to his excess of love. Let humble Martha Forrester once be acknowledged as the heiress of a rich uncle, and you will see a change take place in her views instantly. She will soon, for the sake of a smart fellow like my nephew, of good family and fortune, set aside a common mechanic like your protogée, Philip Lauder."

"You little know Martha Forrester!" exclaimed Deanhaugh, "and you know still less of Philip Lauder, otherwise you would think differently. They are already united together in the bonds of pure and holy affection, and it were the basest cruelty to attempt to step in between them."

"I shan't, I assure you, miller, unless uncle comes," said Deanhouse. But if he does come, he will, you may rely on't. But, meantime, as you recommend this lad so highly, I intend giving him a good job. Does he work cheap, eh?"

"If by cheapness you mean lowness of price," answered Deanhaugh, "Philip won't suit your purpose. The workmanship and material he furnishes are all of the first quality; and if you want gude substantial wark you must pay for't."

"True, true, miller," said the laird, "can't get gold below its standard value. Send him up to Deanhouse to-night, eight o'clock, will show him plans and specifications of what's wanted. Give my respects to Mrs Forrester when you see her, and say shall call some day soon. Brother ejected her you know, not me, eh? Hope she has forgotten it now. Tell Philip to make necessary repairs on cottage, and charge me. Good bye, miller. Mind Lauder, Deanhouse, eight o'clock to-night. Oh! oh! these rheumatisms," ejaculated the old man, as he rose and hobbled out of the door, leaving the honest miller astonished at the interest he had manifested in the welfare and comfort of the widow, and the wish he had expressed to employ Philip Lauder. On his departure Halbert fell into a reverie, during which he unconsciously shook his head repeatedly, as if doubtful of Cauldwell's sincerity. But his generous, open, and manly nature could harbour no suspicion of

any one; and after the grist was over for the day, and the mill-wheel at rest for the night, he washed and dressed himself, and made his way to Philip Lauder's workshop, to deliver in person, and with all due importance, the kind message of Deanhouse.

At the hour appointed Philip Lauder went up to Deanhouse, and was received by the laird with great cordiality. The old gentleman, when the young man entered, was alone, in a little apartment formed in one of the round towers which projected beyond the angular corners of the building. There was a very small fire-place in the room, in which a still smaller fire was expiring in the last stage of decay. Some flickering embers brightened for an instant when the fresh air rushed in on the door being opened, but they soon resumed their ashy paleness, and again lay cold and cheerless. On one side of the fire-place stood a small table, and, on the other, a large old greasy elbow-chair or couch, in which the laird sat reclining, groaning, and starting alternately with occasional touches of gout. He pointed a chair, and invited Lauder to be seated. He treated the youth to a long lecture on the necessity of temperance, and on the most approved and cheapest cures for rheumatism, which he pleasantly insisted was the disease that affected him,—he being too moderate in his mode of living to be a subject on which gout could lay his paw. Immediately thereafter he took from his pocket a bundle of keys, and singling out one, desired Lauder to open a wall-press behind him, and bring forth a huge big-bellied bottle filled with Glenlivet, a brown wooden punch-bowl, and a couple of gigantic wine glasses. He then brewed a comfortable jorum, and inviting the young man to join him, they soon emptied the first bowl; and another, and another, very speedily followed. Old Drawwell now took from his table-drawer a bundle of papers, evidently prepared for the occasion, and handed them to Lauder, saying—

"Sharp lad I see, Lauder. Flemyng gives you high character—will do well here—make fortune rapidly. Money making business, eh? Live cheap, eh? Work at low rate? No danger young man—strong fellow—must labour late and early—mean to encourage you. Have new mill to build at Crooknook—give you a chance of carpenter work—hand me estimate. Have found mason who makes very moderate charges. Young man like you joining him might make good thing of this job; but one against you—cut low—cheapest gets it of course. Reasonable that, you know? Good introduction, eh? Cut low and you have it. Mind, cut low, lad—money scarce—never so hard to come by."

Philip returned Deanhaugh his best thanks in his best manner for the kindness he intended him, and promised to cut as low as was com-

patible with justice to the work, adding, that he would be contented with very little as compensation for his own trouble.

"Of course, of course," said Deanhouse, "must have something for trouble. But you must be content with little, very little, young man. Small profits, quick returns. Old proverb, many littles make a muckle, eh? Not rich myself, but able to be of some service to you by introductions and recommendations, so give me a good cheap job, lad, and look to a handsome return from my influence. That's my way of paying, eh? Returns a hundredfold—think of it. Take plans home—up and examine Crooknook to-morrow. Make out estimate—bring it up to-morrow night. Same hour. Mind cheap, cheap—be sure you make it cheap. Good opening, lad, recollect that—large job—see you don't lose it. I'll set you agoing—I'll make you respectable, eh?"

Philip Lauder left Deanhouse that evening with a very high opinion of Mr Archibald Cauldwell. The interest that worthy gentleman had evinced in his welfare, his kindness, his hospitality, his frankness, were all so unexpected, that the young man, who had not had an opportunity of meeting, on any former occasion, with one so elevated in station, on such familiar terms, thought old Drawwell one of the best of men—a pattern of civility and kindness. Thus believing, poor Philip was exceedingly anxious to secure Mr Cauldwell's work, and at an early hour next morning he was up at Crooknook, inspecting the site of the new mill, measuring and comparing ground plans, specifications, elevations, and all the other documents and details usually connected with such operations. He continued the whole day busily engaged in this employment, and at the hour at which he had to meet Mr Cauldwell, he had scarcely got his calculations completed. He, however, hurried up to Deanhouse, determined, if possible, to strike a bargain with the laird. The night was very dark, and as he walked up the avenue in front of the house, a person passed him whom he had some dim recollection of having seen before; but when or where he could not remember. The dark night grew darker and darker, and he felt relieved from an undefinable feeling of horror which had crept over him, when at length he was admitted into the laird's little sanctorum, and was again greeted with a kindly welcome.

"Come away, Philip; come away, lad," exclaimed Deanhouse. "Been longing for you; wanted to introduce you to my nephew Jack, who has just left. Sharp fellow Jack! Likes you; says you are a bold fellow; advises me to employ you."

"Indeed," said Philip, much astonished. "Really, I feel much obliged to your nephew, Sir, for his kindness;" and the blood rushed through his veins as he thought on the incident which had been the means of introducing him to Martha Forrester, and recollected the pro-

fligacy and cowardice of Cauldwell's promising nephew on that occasion. Again his heart swelled within him, and he felt pity for one in whom want of principle and kindness seemed to be so unaccountably blended together.

"Ay, ay," exclaimed Deanhaugh; "good fellow Jack. You and he must be friends yet. Have you got estimate ready? Sit down. Ay, let me see; all correct, eh? Halloo, halloo, what's this?" he shouted, after a momentary pause. "Prices out of all character; far too high. Young man in business, don't know prices yet, I see."

"I can assure you, Sir," said Philip, respectfully, "that I have calculated the material at cost, and only added a very moderate sum for wages and labour."

"Ah, ha, lad! See where you are out," rejoined Deanhouse. "Where do you buy, and how—cash, eh?"

"Partly cash, Sir," answered Philip; "but in the case of such an extensive job as this I would require credit. Yet my timber merchant would, I daresay, charge me very little additional on that account."

"Many littles make a muckle, Philip," exclaimed Deanhouse. "See it all now; want of cash has puzzled you, and set you wrong in calcution. Here, now, estimate from another tradesman; won't show you name—most respectable man, excellent workman, too. Much below yours, you see. He buys with ready money—that accounts for it. Anxious you should execute work; will give you some cash to account. You can then do it same price, eh? Like to help young people on. Mason I have agreed with; young man like yourself, active and intelligent. Make it a joint contract; give you cash-account on your joint securities; you can then buy cheap—job will pay well, I know. The other person who offers won't work without swingeing profits; you are safe. Is it a bargain? Sign and seal, sign and seal."

"Well," said Philip, "since you have been so good, I shall avail myself of your kind offer; and in so far as my share of the work is concerned, you shall have a first rate job."

The punch-bowl was again brought forth, filled and emptied; the bargain was concluded, the contract signed, and Philip was to call the next day to meet the young mason who was to be his partner in the work, to enter into joint securities for a joint cash-account, that they might, according to Cauldwell's advice, purchase their materials at the first market, and, as their kind patron prognosticated, realize a small fortune from the building of Crooknook mill.

On the following forenoon, the two young contractors met at the house of their generous patron, when they entered into the required stipulations. A very smart, and elegantly attired young gentleman, was present from the banking-house of Messrs Chance, Snacks & Co.,

who, together with another equally smart young lawyer, bustled about, folded and unfolded an alarming quantity of parchments, with most astonishing celerity, took old Cauldwell's signature for a cash-account, and directed the young men to the new banking-house of Messrs Chance, Snacks and Company, at the Cross, for what money they might require to make purchases, so as they might be enabled to commence operations without delay.

The name of Philip's partner in the transaction was John Hastie, a young man, who had only commenced business in the neighbouring village of Coltbridge. Lauder soon discovered that Hastie was similarly circumstanced with himself, that he had little capital, was anxious for employment, and had been engaged on like terms with himself by Cauldwell. He subsequently informed Philip that his estimate for the work to be executed was considerably higher in price than one which had been shown him by that gentleman, but that, in consequence of his recommendation, he had taken the work at the other competitor's prices.

The honest miller, who had been much struck, and highly pleased with Cauldwell's unexpected kindness to Philip, was a little puzzled when he heard the young mason's account of the affair, and said that he would have been gratified if he had known the name of the other competitors. He did not, indeed, suspect that Cauldwell had got up sham estimates to suit his own views anent price; but he thought it possible that those parties, whose prices Lauder and Hastie were to have, might be verging on bankruptcy, and would cut very low, so as to secure the work and get some money among their hands. Flemyng, however, was naturally of a sanguine temperament, and these doubts all passed away when the contractors commenced operations. Old Cauldwell and he met the young men in Colinton, in the neighbourhood of which the building was to be erected; and after they had laid the foundation-stone of Crooknook mill, with all due solemnity, they adjourned to the little tavern of the village, where they spent together a very pleasant evening.

Two months had passed away. The snowy plumed winter, clothed in its glittering and impenetrable armour of ice, had retired before the bold and vigorous advance of young spring, who, as she progressed, waxed stronger, and poured her rich life blood through the veins of plant and herb and flower. The earth was laughing in joyous sunshine, and preparing her robes of beauty in which to welcome and do honour to the coming season.

The widow's cottage was now like a little fairy palace, her garden like a little Eden. What although as yet she had heard nothing more of her absent relative; she had numerous friends who visited her often,

administering to her comfort, and cheering her with hopeful and joyful anticipations. Martha, too, was now more beautiful, more charming, more blooming than ever; and, as she might have been occasionally seen, binding up the slender twig of a monthly rose-tree which had been broken by the wind, or sauntering among the apple blossoms just beginning to burst into beauty, or making her way down the little pebbled pathway that led to the edge of the stream, whence she drew water to nourish her favourite plants, Martha, in her loveliness, paled the flowers she tended, and outshone the fairest objects with which she was surrounded. She was indeed all that eye could desire to gaze on, all that mind could desire to think of; and was she not an angel of light, was she not a source of inspiration to Philip Lauder?

On pretension of acting under the instructions of old Cauldwell, Philip had thatched the cottage anew, and led up with tasteful hand the evergreens that covered the walls. He had also filled the garden with thriving plants, and had obtained from gardeners with whom he was acquainted in the neighbourhood numerous choice flowers for Martha to tend and cherish. Besides all this, Philip was the busiest and the most industrious tradesman in the village, and, at times, such quantities of carpenter work, in the shape of wheels, planks, or carts, lay before his door, as threw even the display in front of Waldie's smithy far into the shade. While his ordinary business was daily improving, he was also busy preparing the timber work required for Crooknook mill, the building portion of which Hastie was pushing through with great speed.

Never were two young men better adapted for business than Philip Lauder and John Hastie. Early and late were they to be seen toiling and labouring with all their heart and strength. Their personal exertions put to shame their journeymen, who in vain attempted to rival their employers. The mental portion of their work seemed to be carried on by some invisible assistant, while an arithmetical oracle, to whom nobody had ever access but themselves, appeared to keep them right in all their calculations. They were never behind with those plans and guides by which they conducted their operations, although their preparation must have cost them the greater portion of their nights.

Old Cauldwell was delighted to see the progress of the building. Again and again he praised the industry of the young contractors, and chucklingly congratulated himself on his discrimination in having selected two such active young men to execute the work. Often did he talk in glowing terms of the bright prospects before them, and again and again did he offer them further advances of money to enable them to get on still more speedily. Messrs Chance, Snacks and Company, the bankers, were also exceedingly polite to the young contractors,

said that they had heard such characters of them, that they were anxious to have them as customers, and they hoped that any little bills Messrs Lauder and Hastie might have to discount would be passed through their bank, which they said could advance money sufficient to raise mills on every fall on the Water of Leith between its source and its termination.

In the mean time, Philip and his partner went on with their work, under the impression that all was right. They imagined that, by sheer hard labour, they could make anything pay. One day, indeed, after the cash-account and an additional hundred pounds had been drawn, they were both surprised and disappointed to find that the quantity of work was not executed which required to be finished when the first instalment of the contract price was due, while the amount of that instalment did not exceed the sum which they had, through the kindness of Deanhouse, already drawn.

They imagined, however, that there must have been some mistake in the way in which the payments had been apportioned, and they went on with their work more vigorously than ever. The time for the roofing in of the particular portion of the work, and the first payment approached, and the day on which that was expected to be accomplished was fixed on for a pleasure excursion. Flemyng, Mrs Forrester, and Martha agreed to walk up the water-side to Colinton to see Philip's job, and the miller's cart was to come up in the evening to convey them home.

It was May-day when the party set out on this little pleasure excursion, and a glorious May-day it was, the harbinger of a bright and glorious summer. Ay, and Martha never looked more bright and more beautiful than she did on that eventful day. Whether the glow on her countenance had been increased in brightness by the glistening dew drops which, at early morn, Philip had gathered from the rose-bushes and sprinkled over her in playful tenderness, I know not; but the fond mother and the honest miller, as they followed in the rear of the handsome couple, gazed on them with heartfelt pride and joyful contemplation. What a delightful glen or strath that was they had to traverse, too; how much was it in harmony with their feelings. The road was now overhung with jutting crags and tufted points, now overspread with the young green foliage of trees and bushes; now the joyous party tripped over the channelled bed of the silver stream, now they skirted its brim by overhanging footpaths, dimpled and worn away by the winter-flood. The water-fed sides of these overhanging paths were studded with wild flowers; and as Philip bent over to look for the reflection of those children of beauty, his eye ever and anon was attracted by the figure and countenance of her who hung in his arm, and before whose loveliness these delicate flowers seemed pale and withered.

Old thatch-roofed cottages and mills, too, they passed, the mill-wheels throwing over their mimic cataracts with bubbling din. The stream now discoursing some half-slumbering melody, now awakening and raising its voice in louder and more complicated harmonies; now would it patter, and dance, and leap, and gush in joyous glee; then would it softly approach the banks, and murmuringly die away, as if worn out by its gambols. Anon would it shoot away with renovated vigour, again pause, as if to gather breath; and now would it gleam like a solid bar of silver as it fell over some tiny precipice; and now would it sparkle like innumerable diamonds, as broken into millions of brilliants it rose in spray to glisten in the sun. Here was the blackness and stillness of midnight, there the light, and beauty, and the bustle of day. The sunshine, anon, penetrated into the deepest recesses, broke through the thickest and the darkest foliage, investing all nature with new life and beauty. Trees shot away up the faces of the steep crags, as if climbing to heaven. Far overhead and around in every direction, linnet, lark, blackbird, and thrush were heard awakening the air with song. Damheads and mill-sluices under repair told of the force and impetuosity of that inconstant water. Grey rocks, half covered with moss, peeping out here and there in the bed and by the sides of the stream, contrasted well with the clear-skinned, barefooted little fellows you saw *gumping* for trout in the nooks and corners formed by these hoary water-worn veterans. Then the pathway led the party up through thick shady woods, until they reached the summit of the steep romantic crag, and gazed down with a feeling of awe into the beautiful dell below. They had now gained the old church road; they walked along on the green sward with which this sanctified pathway was almost overgrown; again they descended the hill, and the village of Colinton lay before them with its romantic valley, its long rows of cottages imbedded in the hollows, its shoals of rosy urchins, and its myriads of white ducks, its *kail-yards*, and their rows of currant bushes, its cheerful old matrons with their close-eared caps, and its healthy old carles with their broad blue bonnets, seated on door-stones, sunning themselves. There the sweet little village lay all smiling, and, at the next turn was Crooknook Mill; but there was an object of more importance immediately before them to the eye of the widow and Martha Forrester, —there was the grave-yard of Colinton, and the grave of John Forrester. The widow felt herself almost overcome, she leaned on Flemyng. Martha also felt deeply affected, and Philip drew the trembling girl still more closely to him. In this way they stepped over the ancient style, passed the ancient church, and recognized a figure in close conversation with the sexton at the very grave they had come to visit. They approached, the person turned round, and discovered to Flemyng the features of the mysterious stranger, the foster-brother of Forrester.

COLINTON CHURCHYARD

CHAPTER X.

A cot for the tenant, a ha' for the laird;
A turf for them baith in the auld kirkyard.
Old Song.

T was somewhat strange that widow Forrester, and her husband's foster-brother, after so long a separation, should have met at the grave of him who had formed the link that bound them together. It seemed, indeed, as if Providence, for the purpose of giving additional solemnity to their meeting, had conducted them thither, that the friendly vows they were about to exchange might be pledged over the ashes of him whom they had both loved so dearly. At the very moment when the widow had come to bewail her loneliness, life seemed to spring from death; and at the tomb of him whose memory she had cherished so fondly, did she meet her long lost relative, waiting to mingle his tears with hers—to proffer her the friendship and the love of a brother.

To account for this meeting, it is necessary to return for an instant to the village of the Water of Leith, where the stranger had arrived about an hour after the miller and party had set off on their Colinton and Crooknook excursion. Mounted on a handsome black charger, he had made his way straight to Waldie's smithy, and that worthy, who was hard at work at the moment, no sooner recognised him, than he uttered an exclamation of joy, threw down his forehammer, and rushed out to assist the stranger to alight.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" he shouted, and his journeyman Cyclops re-echoed the sounds. "Hurrah! Lang looked for's come at last. A' right now. There's luck in waiting; aye said that. See gin night. Waldie's byword, aye comes true some time or other. Hurrah for Mrs Forrester and her bonny daughter. Light ye down, sir; light ye down." The stranger, however, would not dismount, but shaking the smith cordially by the black but trusty hand, enquired anxiously after the widow, and in an amazing short space of time, Waldie, in his usual brief and abrupt manner, had related all the particulars concerning her and her daughter, with which the reader is already acquainted.

On learning that his interesting relatives were away with the miller on an excursion to Colinton, in which churchyard the smith informed him the widow's husband, his own foster-brother, was interred, the stranger manifested symptoms of deep emotion, and promising to see Waldie on his return, gave his horse the spur, and set off in the direction of Colinton. He then made his way to the churchyard, and having learnt from the hoary-headed sexton where the grave of his brother was, was there discovered by the miller, as mentioned at the conclusion of the last chapter.

Words could convey but a feeble idea of the emotion evinced by the widow and her relative at meeting. The latter gazed in the countenance of the former with intense earnestness, as if marking every line that time and sorrow had indented there. Again, and again, he raised her hand to his lips, and moistened it with his tears. Then did he turn his enraptured gaze on Martha, contemplating her beautiful form and countenance with deep interest; her resemblance to her father awakening associations which brought the tears coursing over his weatherbeaten cheeks. He, the hoary veteran, who had beheld unmoved the devastations of war and famine, was overcome by a sudden outburst of feeling, and wept like a child. His lips moved in an attempt to speak, but no word escaped them. Silence, deep, profound, expressive silence prevailed amongst those present; and amid the holy stillness, joy found her way to the hearts of the mourners.

The scene was altogether impressive. The sunbeams fell resplendent on the little whitened church—gave a silvery lustre to the stream that glided through the adjoining ravine—flickered and played amongst the young green leaves that rustled overhead—slumbered amid the silence of the everlasting hills—poured themselves into little nooks among the graves and tombstones—and, in concentrated brilliancy, glistened like a glory on the humble grave of John Forrester.

Flemyng, who with Lauder, stood at a respectful distance, looking on the scene with feelings of deep interest, now stepped forward, and addressing the stranger, said—"This is an unexpected meeting, sir; we had little expectation of seeing you here to-day."

"No," replied the latter, whom these few words at once recalled to himself. "You could, indeed, have had but little expectation of meeting me here to-day. In truth, I rather fancy you had little hope of meeting me anywhere again. I have been detained abroad much longer than I anticipated when I wrote you. However this meeting amply compensates for the anxiety I have endured. To have met at the grave of a beloved brother his wife, his child, and such a friend as yourself, Mr Flemyng, has awakened feelings long a stranger to my bosom—feelings which I shall not attempt to give utterance to

at present—feelings of grateful affection, and of lasting esteem. Accept, in the meantime, my warmest thanks. I trust to be able by and bye, to evince my gratitude for your kindness to my dear sister-in-law here. Indeed, when I arrived at the village to-day, and learned that you were here, I could not resist the yearning I felt to see you, so giving my steed the spur, we made short work of our journey, and here you see I had arrived before you. Ay, ay," he continued in more subdued tones, "long years have elapsed since last I trode this hallowed ground,—thrice hallowed to me, now that it contains the ashes of my beloved brother, in addition to the remains of her who was the goddess of my youthful idolatry, and whose death, young as I was at that time, was the chief cause of my leaving my home. Sweet girl, I did, indeed, treasure up your fair image in my memory; and even now, I cannot resist repeating the stanzas to which these feelings gave birth:—

MY COTTAGE MAID.

My cottage maid, my cottage maid,
Ah! long and weary ways I've strayed,
Afar from home, afar from thee,
Sweet idol of my memory;
To whom my fondest feelings cling,
To whom my soul would fain take wing.—
All wealth, and power, and glory fade
Before thy light, my Cottage Maid.

Thy sylph-like form, that heath clad-grot,
That ivy-circled, thatch-roofed cot,
All lead my wandering fancy back,
Along Time's hollow sounding track,
To Nature as she wont to be,
When, in my merry boyhood's glee,
A truant o'er the fields I strayed,
With love and thee, my Cottage Maid.

Ah! oft we climbed the whin-crowned hill,
Where lark and linnet warbled shrill,
'Mong skipping lambs, and bleating sheep,
Mid goats that scaled each craggy steep;—
Then flower was pluckt, and tuft was shorn,
Then fence was leapt, and skirt was torn;
And there, in rosy bloom arrayed,
Sprung like a sylph, my Cottage Maid.

When balmy moisture steeped the trees,
And hazed the air, and hushed the breeze,
And lazy cattle listless browzed,
And hummed the bee, with fulness drowsed;
And glove, and cup, and slip, and bell,
With dew all silvered, gemmed the dell;
Far richer than each juicy blade
Were thy sweet lips, my Cottage Maid.

Or, when soft night had lulled to rest
Each little flower on earth's fair breast;
And tall trees shook their leafy wings
'Mid nature's holy murmurings,
And sense and feeling, sound and sight,
Were chastened by the silent night;—
'Twas heaven, in checquered forest glade,
To stray with thee, my Cottage Maid.

And there, while dark trees topped the sky,
Obscuring tints of orient dye—
All golden though those tints might be—
Why, what were skies of gold to me,
When cheek to cheek, and heart to heart,
We both like timid fawns would start,
If one small ray pierced through the shade
That wrapt me and my Cottage Maid.

When heaven's pale brow was jewelled bright,
And moon and stars shed floods of light;
Together would we wand'ring stray,
And strive to trace each glist'ning ray;
Yet not a light illumed the skies,
One-half so lustrous as those eyes
That with my trembling heartstrings played,
E'en when half closed, my Cottage Maid.

O, happy days! O, happy hours!
O, life's fantastic fairy flowers!
Why fly those happy hours away?
Why do those fairy flowers decay?
On Time's swift wing all pleasures fly,
Like autumn clouds athwart the sky:
Now, low in earth my flower is laid—
My sun of life, my Cottage Maid!

The wanderer recited the foregoing poem with much feeling; and the recitation, which was listened to with breathless interest, excited a corresponding emotion in the breasts of all present. The old man had faithfully preserved a remembrance of the exact spot where the object of his early affections had been interred, and the now scarcely discernible grassy hillock rose within a few paces of his brother's grave. While he poured forth his feelings, he had imperceptibly wandered from the latter to the former; and, at the conclusion of the recitation, he stood bending over the green turf that covered his cottage maiden, his head buried in his hands, and his whole bearing indicating a deep and overwhelming sorrow. Martha was much affected by this touching memorial of the strong and abiding nature of early love, and stepping lightly forward, she took from her breast the little posey of wild flowers which Philip had presented to her, and strewed them over the turf, on which her uncle's eyes were rivetted. The flowers caught the old man's eye; he looked up—his gaze fell upon Martha's countenance. Her whole appearance was so fragile, so meek, so aërial, that she seemed a very impersonation of the spirit of compassion, and he looked on her as an angel sent to sympathize with and lighten his sorrows. He seized her hand, he pressed it to his lips, he moistened it with his tears, and in broken tones exclaimed, "My own, my dear, dear child! Now, now, I am indeed happy!"

All present were again deeply affected, and felt that that heart must be in the right place, which had treasured up, so faithfully and fondly, the memory of early days. Flemyng, delighted with the bright prospects which the return of so warm-hearted a relative opened up for the widow and her daughter, shook the old man by the hand, and expressed the happiness he felt at meeting him again.

"The meeting," exclaimed the stranger, "is indeed most interesting, and the scene so associated and identified with the memory of those most dear to me, that my feelings have completely overcome me, and I have to crave your pardon for having given way to so much selfish abstraction. I trust, however, that I shall never again allow such feelings to interfere with the obligations I am under to consult, on all occasions, the wishes and the comforts of you, my kind friends, and of the widow and daughter of my departed brother."

"Alas, Sir," said Mrs Forrester, "I have little or no claim upon your attention. We are not relatives; you are neither compelled by law, nor expected by usage, to assist us in any way, and the promptings of your own benevolent nature are the only ties which bind you to us. If, indeed, a grateful heart be any return for your kindness, be assured you have it."

"Ah, mother," interposed Martha, "you might have included an-

other. You will not refuse me an opportunity of expressing my gratitude."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed the stranger, "Say no more, say no more. The benefits I have received from your family are never to be repaid. The delight I feel at meeting with such friends, after thirty years' absence from my native country, is such as I cannot describe. You, my dear sister, must recollect I am your brother; and you, my dear child, must look upon me not as your uncle only, but as your father. God bless you! God for ever bless you!"—and so saying, he took the hands of both in his, pressed them kindly, and the bond of relationship was thus sealed between them.

Flemyng here reminded the friends that the day was wearing through, that they still had a considerable distance to walk, and the stranger at once said he was ready to accompany them on their intended excursion. "I suppose," he continued, turning to the miller, "you were beginning to think I should never return, when I did not make my appearance at the time appointed; you were beginning to think me, I daresay, some blusterer, who had promised more than he meant to perform —promises, you know, being so much more easily made than kept."

"Na, na," said the miller, "the twenty guineas you so timeously remitted, I took as a guarantee that you were sincere in your professions of friendship for the widow, and I never doubted that you would return, if you were alive."

"Ah," replied the stranger, "but there is little security for life on the battle-field; and there have I been since we parted. Had I fallen, you should never have heard of me."

"In that case," said the miller, "we might have seen your name in the returns of the killed and wounded; and had it been so, I am sure it would have been mentioned with respect. Even when a boy, you were remarkable for a cool and determined bravery, and I have no doubt these qualities have had their share in raising you to the eminence you now appear to occupy."

"Ah, my dear friend," said the stranger, "promotion in the army or navy is not always secured by bravery; but supposing I had fallen, and my name had been mentioned with respectful regret, you could not have recognised it as belonging to me. I dropt the name of Forrester when I left home."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mrs Forrester, with considerable trepidation; "and may I ask the cause of your doing so? There is nothing, I trust, in our humble name of which you need be ashamed."

"Nothing, my dear sister-in-law, nothing," replied the stranger; "on the contrary, it is a name that I look on with a feeling approaching to veneration. But I had no legal right to it, and my practice

through life has been never to assume the semblance of that which I was not. Accordingly, I resolved to bear the nickname with which a waggish shipmate christened me. Shortly after going on board of a man-of-war, being then very stubborn and self-willed, this messmate, an honest tar, noticed my peculiarity, and named me after what he called my clenchers, in allusion to a habit I had of repeating my last sentences with an air of triumph. So under the soubriquet of Bill Clencher have I gone ever since, and I am now become so familiarized with the name, that I really like it."

"Ah!" exclaimed his sister-in-law, "but you must resume your name of William Forrester," and as she said this, she took her relative by one arm, whilst Martha took him by the other, when the trio walked towards Philip Lauder, who stood waiting on them at the churchyard gate.

As they advanced, Mrs Forrester inquired of her brother-in-law why he had never written her.

"Write you!" exclaimed Mr Forrester, with an expression of surprise, "I did write you frequently, but never had any answer. My letters, I suppose, must have miscarried. I became annoyed at having no replies, and at length dropped writing you. But, indeed, latterly I could not have kept up the correspondence, as I was imprisoned for many years in an enemies' country. No marvel, then, is it, Miller Flemyng, my face should look as thin as ever. Hard fighting, long marching, and scanty feeding, keep down both mind and body. Besides, in such cases every feeling and energy is directed to one end, the attainment of distinction, and it is only after the bustle and excitement of action is past, that war appears in all its naked deformity. When we look on the field of battle, and see it red with the blood of God's creatures, it is then the heart sickens, and the eye shrinks from the contemplation of the unholy scene. Then does the thoughts of the war-worn veteran revert with infinite delight to the scenes of his early days. Then does he long for the secluded and sequestered abodes of peace, and love, and holy tranquility. Then does he long to return to his native village, to spend the evening where he has spent the morning of his days; and what a blessed return is mine with such a sister and such a niece? Oh!" he added, smiling, "I shall be so fond of you, I shall be for keeping you all to myself; I shall, indeed. And as to you, my sweet young charge, my lily of the valley," he said, addressing Martha, and looking kindly in her face as he spoke, "I must, have a share in the choice of your husband." I must, indeed. And Martha's countenance was so happy and so beautiful, flushed and overspread as it was with crimson blushes, that Philip Lauder, who now approached to help the ladies over the style, thought and felt that she

had never appeared so fascinating. The open, manly, and ingenuous appearance of the youth made a favourable impression on old Forrester, who, however, scanned him from head to foot with an eye that twinkled keenly beneath its large shaggy brows. He resigned the ladies to Lauder's care, who led the way toward Crooknook Mill, along the water side, old Forrester having sent his horse forward to the village, following in company with Halbert Flemyng, with whom he wished to have some conversation.

"Pray, who is this young man who appears to be on such familiar terms with Martha and her mother?" inquired Forrester of Flemyng. "Is he any relation?"

"No, he is no relation," replied the miller; but he is an ingenious and industrious tradesman, who is esteemed highly by all who know him. He commenced business a short time since in your late brother's workshop, and your sister again occupies her old cottage."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Forrester, "and how did they become acquainted?"

"They first became acquainted under circumstances sufficiently romantic, as you shall hear," replied the miller; and he proceeded to relate the story of Martha's rescue, the particulars of which is already well known to the reader.

"Ay, ay," said Forrester, "romantic enough, certainly: and the part enacted by this young man must have produced a strong impression in his favour, doubtless. He is a good looking lad, too, and a decent, I daresay, but he is no fitting match for my niece. We must endeavour to have her better mated."

"Better mated!" echoed the miller, starting back, planting his huge staff emphatically on the ground, and looking at Forrester as if he could have pierced him through, "better mated!" he repeated, "and whaur could she be better mated than wi' Philip Lauder? Saul, but siller maks wise folk fools. Philip mayna be able to pay down guinea for guinea wi' you, but he'll work his way yet, or he cheats me. You an' I baith ken what it is to scramble up the brae, and we should aye be ready to gie a' young followers a pu' up ahint us."

"All very true," said Forrester, somewhat drily, "but we must take care, while doing so, that we be not ourselves pulled down from the position we have gained by much hard labour and perseverance. A swimmer may be drowned in attempting to save others. A man who attempts to assist all his poor friends, runs the risk of being left poor enough himself at last."

"Saul, man!" exclaimed the miller, warmly, "but yours is a cauld-blooded kind o' philosophy, and would go to root out frae the human breast the finest feelings of human nature. Because ae life-boat may

have been swamped, is that a sufficient reason why another shouldna be sent to succour and save the crew o' the ship that has been dashed to pieces on the rocky coast? Because charity is whiles abused, will that ever justify the miser in looking at his next-door neighbour starving, without stretching out a hand to help him? Come, come, my friend, you maunna advance sic doctrines again."

"If all were like you, miller," said Forrester, "all simple, warm-hearted, and unsophisticated, such doctrines could not, and would not, be avowed by any one. But I have been obliged to adopt them in self-defence. I know the world well. I have not walked through it with my eyes shut. I perceive, that, independent as I am in circumstances, I am yet looked down upon in consequence of my low origin, and I am determined that my dear girl shall, if possible, be united to some young man of good family, who will have sufficient influence to introduce her into the first society. Rank and station are respected even in those countries where a perfect equality is affected."

"Rank an' station! bran an' sheelings!" exclaimed the miller indignantly. "What higher an' purer source o' honest pride than a respectable parentage? A virtuous mother, and a God-fearing father? What matters it whether they have been rich or poor? That's a' the pride o' family, in my opinion, that's worth having, or worth boasting o'."

"Granted, granted," said Forrester, "but that pride has been denied me. I know not who nor what my parents were. When young, I made every inquiry of my foster-mother regarding them, but obtained no information. My only reply was a tear, a kiss, and a God bless you—you are to me as if I had born you. After the death of the dear girl to whom I had formed a juvenile attachment, and whose loss was one of the causes that induced me to leave home, a vague notion haunted me, that I might probably learn something of my parents abroad. But after many years residence in a foreign land, I have returned as ignorant on the subject as when I left."

"Ah!" said the miller, "I see ye wad fain believe that ye belang to some great family yoursell, and that's the cause o' your hankerin' after rank an' station. Think nae mair on sic nonsense, man. Look behind ye there," continued he, as descending into a deep dell, they were about to lose sight of the ancient graveyard, "see ye not how lovingly the sun blinks on the graves o' your poor foster-brother an' your ain cottage maiden, wha lie aneath thae bonny green turfs that are planted by the hand o' Nature, nurtured by the dews of heaven, an' cheered by the blessed light o' the life-dispensing sun. Are the departed no better lying there, think ye, than in the dark, dowie, mouldy vaults o' the rich, o'ergrown wi' rank weeds, an' filled wi' unwholesome air? But here

we are close on our friends, an' now I shall introduce you to Philip. He is building a mill here e'ennow, and our errand here to-day, is to see the progress that he an' his partner are makin'. We're to hae a chack o' dinner wi' the young men at the village inn, an' ye are just come in time to get share o't. Baith Philip an' his partner will be happy o' the honour o' your company. They are intelligent, as well as industrious lads; they baith work hard, an' mak excellent wark."

"Yes," interrupted Forrester," and at low rates, too, I'll warrant you. This will no doubt be a contract job. New beginners rarely get any other kind of employment. I hope this will pay? Who is their employer?"

"Mr Cauldwell of Deanhouse," said Flemyng; "but you will know all the particulars hereafter. Meantime, allow me to introduce you to Mr Lauder, for whom I intreat your friendship. He has a large job here, you see," continued the miller, leading Forrester to a turn of the road where they could see the whole work going on."

Philip blushed and stammered a little, begging Mr Forrester to excuse the miller for attaching so much importance to so small a matter. "But," he continued, "our locality is small, and there are few works so extensive carried on by village contractors. You, sir, who have seen so much of the world, will think it trifling, but small things are great to small people, and we are young beginners."

"Very true, lad; very well said, indeed," replied Forrester, struck with Philip's judicious remarks. "Take always this common-sense view of matters and you will get on. The world is before you; by degrees you may extend your business over the country. I shall, myself, very likely, require a snuggery built one of these days, and if you do your work well, I shall very probably employ you and your partner."

Philip did his best to express the gratitude he felt for this intended kindness, and the whole party now proceeded in a body to inspect the building operations, a sight not without a kind of interest in its way. Carts and horses, heavily loaded, were seen making their way through tracks all but impassable. Strong, firm set labourers, were seen bearing immense burdens of building materials, up steep and narrow gangways. Suspended by huge cranes, immense masses of stone were swung up to their places. Stalwart carpenters lifted up and laid down heavy planks and beams with as much apparent ease as if they had been willow wands. Rows of sun-browned masons hewed and chiselled away with as much regularity as if they were beating time in a concerted piece of music. Hammers and mallets were wielded by the horny fists of strong and willing men, and every stroke they dealt re-echoed and reverberated from the bosom of the valley, which was

here entirely enclosed by steep crags that shot far upwards, their summits crowned with firs, and their grey faces indented with the wrinkles of a thousand years. Every thing went on with the utmost regularity. Hastie himself was seen pushing actively about, the flush on his blooming countenance deepened by exertion. It was, in short, altogether evident, that, whether the work paid or not, there was no lack of diligence on the part of the contractors. The miller was consulted about the best point to place the sluice-gate and water-wheel. Forrester inspected the whole of the work narrowly, seemed to be intimately acquainted with the building, and declared that he had never seen a better job. Thereafter the whole party, now joined by Hastie, made their way to the village inn, for the purpose of partaking of the dinner which had been ordered at the expense of Lauder and his partner.

The inn was a thatch-roofed building of one storey, with a narrow passage inside, that led at once to the kailyard and the stable, to neither of which was there any other mode of ingress or egress. The kitchen, which was the only portion of the house used by the inmates, was on one side of this passage, and on the other side was the principal room, and another small apartment, furnished with a clumsy fir table, and two as clumsy fir forms, into which the villagers were admitted only when the kitchen was too full. The principal apartment was reserved for pastoral calls, or other great occasions; and it must have cost Philip and his partner no little trouble to coax the landlady of "The Sheep's-Head and Trotters," for such was the name of the inn, to give them her best parlour on this particular occasion. When Mr Forrester had sent up his horse, which was not without some trouble forced through the narrow passage to the stable, the landlady was so struck with the superior appearance of the animal, that she declared, "it maun belang to somebody o' quality;" and as the owner might be expected along with the miller and party, she set herself to work in good earnest to brush up every thing about the room, and busied herself in providing a dinner that, she said, "was fit to be set before a Lord."

Accordingly, when our friends arrived, they found every thing in readiness; and being pretty sharply set, they ordered dinner to be instantly placed upon the table. The landlady herself made her appearance, bearing a huge tureen of sheep's-head broth, a dish for which she had acquired considerable celebrity. Forrester had not seen this favourite national dish since he left Scotland, and he partook of it most heartily, jocularly remarking, that "toothless mouths agreed well with spoon diet." The landlady, a buxom country woman, was delighted to hear an Englishman, as she took Mr Forrester to be, praising her cookery, and bustled about, remarking in under tones,

" that the poor benighted Englishers were to be pitied, wha were ignorant o' sic dainties as parritch an' sheep-head kail." After the broth, the veritable sheep's head and trotters made their appearance, together with a splendid model of a haggis, a leg of mutton, raised on Colinton braes, and a brace of plump hens, fed by the landlady herself. The party being all in excellent appetite, the tempting array of dishes just enumerated were quickly curtailed of their fair proportions.

Dinner ended—the miller, who officiated as chairman, had the toddy bowl placed before him, and commenced making up a jorum of that exciting beverage. Mr Forrester engaged in an interesting conversation with his sister-in-law, Martha and Philip began exchanging looks of deep meaning, and such as lovers well understand. The miller was bantering the landlady, who stood pouring into the bowl the hot water, from a kettle with a spout like a water-pipe ; and Hastie sat dandling on his knees a little rosy cheeked, curly-headed urchin, the landlady's promising heir, whom he had caught peeping in at the door, when, who should enter the room, with a familiar, patronizing, yet respectful air, but Mr Archibald Cauldwell.

" Ah, Philip," exclaimed the old gentleman, " feasting, eh ? Might have told me, man. Would have been delighted to form one of the party. Mrs Forrester well, I trust, eh ? Heh ! this your pretty daughter, eh ? How very like you she is, eh ? Good as well as beautiful, eh ? The miller here, too ? No multure to-day, eh ? Ah, I beg pardon ; stranger here, I see—wasn't aware ; mustn't interrupt you. On family business, perhaps ? Will look in again by and bye, eh ?"

" We have no private business, Sir," said Philip, starting to his feet, " and I should feel highly gratified by your company. This is our kind patron and employer, Sir," he continued, addressing himself to Forrester ; this is Mr Cauldwell of Deanhouse."

" Indeed !" exclaimed Mr Forrester, " then is he doubly welcome ; first, on account of his kindness to you, and, secondly, on account of 'Auld Langsyne.' You will scarcely, I presume, recollect me now, Sir," he continued, addressing himself to Cauldwell, as that old worthy hobbled to a seat which Philip set for him. " I should have known you, although above thirty years have elapsed since I saw you. Ah, many a wild day's work have you and I had together, plundering birds' nests and hen-roosts, killing old women's cats with terrier dogs, and cutting the buttons off our clothes to play at pitch-and-toss with. No place was proof against our combined attacks ; and even Deanhouse itself was not safe from our depredations. Recollect you of little Willie Forrester ?"

" What," exclaimed old Deanhouse, his keen eye sparkling with delight, " are you William Forrester, my boyish companion ? Ah, woe

is me! Times changes! Old men now, eh? Better and wiser men also, I trust, eh? Much need, much need! Well, how things come about! strange meeting this,—ain't it, Mrs Forrester? Ain't it miller, eh?"

"Strange, indeed!" exclaimed the widow, with much emotion.

"Very strange!" echoed the miller. "'Od, we maun profit by it; we maun mak up for our lang separation, by making the night as merry as possible. We maun try and forget for the time the lang years that hae rowed ower us sin' we parted, and dedicate this meeting to auld langsyne. Ye'll need to stand a crown bowl o' punch the day, laird."

"Too much, too much, Deanhaugh, can't stand it," said the laird; "can't stand it; hard times! Heavy outlay! Your friend Philip here is clearing me out. I will soon be pennyless."

"Gae wa' man; that's aye the way wi' you auld misers," exclaimed the miller. "Ye're aye feared ye'll wear out your siller; better wear it out man, than let the care of keeping't wear out you. Philip, sing us that sang o' Mark Sprot's on the subject. 'Od, that's the philosophy for me."

On being thus requested, Philip, who appeared to be more than ordinarily excited, lilted the following verses with great spirit.

A DISCUSSION.

"Your wealth's in your purse, and my wealth's in my hame,
In twa bonny bairns, an' a wee comely dame:
Your gowd and your siller may tak wings an' flee,—
My wife an' my weanies will cling aye to me."

"A wife an' twa weanies are gey costly gear,
When siller is scarce, and when markets are dear;
A bag o' red gowd, under good lock an' key—
O, that is the wealth that fin's favour wi' me."

"Our table o' dainties is whiles unco scant,
Yet gude hamilt mercies, thank God, we ne'er want;
We're no ill to haud here, and when we're set free,
My wife and my weans will gang heavenward wi' me."

"Troth, Johnie ye're right. There's my heart an' my hand;
There's half o' my treasure, and half o' my land;
They canna gang wi' me when I come to dee,
Sae Johnie, look out a bit wifie for me."

" There, now, Deanhouse," exclaimed the miller at the conclusion of the song; " tak a lesson. Gae wa' and seek a wife for yoursell, and dinna be mopin' and dwinin' like a howlet ony langer in your auld patrimonial biggin'. Mak yoursell a useful member o' society."

" Too old, too old, miller," said Deanhouse. " You and I," he continued to Forrester, " must now continue old bachelors to the end of the chapter. We have those to leave behind us who may regard our memory with as much veneration as if they had been our own children. What say you, Mrs Forrester? What say you, Martha, eh?"

But neither Mrs Forrester nor Martha said anything; the cheeks of the latter flushed and reddened, when, as if to relieve them from their embarrassment, Coal Jock, whom the miller had appointed to come up with the cart to convey them home, tapped at the door with the butt-end of his whip, and asked if the " gentles were ready to gang yet." Both the ladies left the room to prepare for their departure, while Jock was admitted and installed a member of the company.

On being seated, Jock smoothed down his hair over his brow, drew his hand twice or thrice over his face, cast around a half knowing, half shy glance on all present,—emptied glass after glass as they were presented to him,—until at last feeling himself perfectly at ease, he began to chat with great freedom and familiarity. Forrester was quite delighted with him; the miller related the leading incidents of Jock's career, his becoming a coal-carter instead of a miller's man, and his returning to his former profession; and, concluded honest Flemyng, addressing himself to Jock, " I fancy ye like the mill wark better than the coal tred? Is't sae, Jock?"

" Canna say I ken muckle differ, Mr Flemyng, bating your kindness," said Jock; " just sax and half a dozen."

" Ay, but the flour is mair kindly than coal-dust, is't no?" inquired the miller.

" Muckle about muckle," answered Jock; " they are baith gey stoury an' drouthy. It taks as muckle moisture to slocken the tane as the tither."

" What!" exclaimed Cauldwell, " millers don't drink like coal-carters, eh, Deanhaugh?"

" Neither the ane nor the ither," interposed Jock, " will refuse a gude caulker frae a giein' hand."

" Indeed," said Cauldwell, " and do you find as many giein' hands amongst the respectable customers your master supplies with meal as amongst those kindred spirits you were wont to distribute your dross among? Surely not, eh?"

" Atweel mair than sic as you would think. Mensefu' wives are aye mensefu' baith wi' their drams an' their maggs. I'm unco weel aff now,

and want only a wee bit place to rear game cocks in to mak me a' right. I used to mak unco weel out wi' the bit burdies, when I stayed in Gilmerton. I hae aye been coming up to speer at ye, laird, gin ye wad let me your auld hen-house and the wee bit grund about it. I wad put a pailin' round it, and keep the beauties frae scrapin' up your grund."

"What!" exclaimed old Cauldwell, "Rear fighting cocks on my grounds? Never, never! Degrading, brutal practice! Disgrace to the country! Ruinous to all concerned!"

"'Od, laird," replied Jock coolly, "gin a' tales be true, ye were wont to be fond aneugh o' the sport in your young days. They say it rins in the blood; and your nephew John was a member o' the Edinburgh Cockfighting Club. I hae seen him there, when I used to gang wi' the burdies to their meetings."

"Ay, but my dear nephew attends no such meetings now. He is much altered of late; we must all have our wild oats sown, you know, eh, Mr Forrester?"

"Oh, yes, Sir; and we must reap them, too," replied the latter.

The widow and daughter now appeared, dressed and ready to return home, and Jock stalked forth to get his gallant steed in readiness, murmuring to himself, "Aye, aye, Jack Cauldwell and me will gie up cockfighting in ae day, I'm thinking."

The whole party now prepared for their departure. Forrester's tall black horse was led from the stable, and a barefooted flibbertygibbet was dispatched to catch old Cauldwell's gallant white charger, which had been sent to pick up the scanty herbage usually found by road-sides in the month of May. The miller invited Forrester to be his guest for the evening; but Deanhouse insisted on carrying him home to his ancient domicile. "Nobody there to annoy us," he said. "You and I, old bachelors, can have a canny crack together, eh? Fight old battles over again in little snuggery. Wont take denial. Must want your friend for to-night, Mrs Forrester. Will come to you to-morrow when you have prepared cottage for his reception."

Mrs Forrester felt that her cottage could not afford such conveniences and accommodation as those to which her friend must have been accustomed; but she did not relish the idea of his going with Cauldwell. The miller, however, gave his opinion in favour of the latter course, and the two horsemen set off in company. Mrs Forrester and the miller took their seats among the straw in the miller's comfortable looking cart. Coal Jock leaped up with amazing dexterity, and balancing himself on the edge of the vehicle with a jaunty air, drove the jolly horse along the high-road at an easy but smart pace. Meantime Martha and Philip, by way of reaching home sooner, took what Philip

called a short cut, although it was longer by a third than the common road; and threading the mazes of the wood, they were soon close by the water-side, treading a sylvan pathway, deep, deep down in the beautiful dell of Colinton.

During the excitement produced by the sudden and unexpected appearance of the widow's relative; and, indeed, until that gentleman had disappeared in company with Cauldwell, Philip Lauder had felt his spirits unusually light, in consequence of the brilliant prospects now fairly opened up for Mrs Forrester and her daughter; and it was not until he was walking alone with Martha, in the seclusion of the valley through which the streamlet wandered, that the apprehension of ultimately losing her came across his mind, and made him miserable. He felt a presentiment that the fair being whose form was blended with all his visions of future happiness, was about to be torn from him, and he saw nothing before him but misery and despair. He could not account for this feeling, neither could he control it. In vain he attempted to appear cheerful; his usually smiling and open countenance grew moody and dark, and his usually distinct and intelligent conversation became confused and almost unintelligible. Struck by this change, which became more and more apparent, Martha could not help being affected in a similar manner, although she endeavoured to rally her spirits, and asked in her usual gentle manner a number of little questions at Philip, to which he returned very incoherent and inappropriate answers. The lovers walked on, and both felt that they were approaching a point in their career when a full and unreserved disclosure of each others sentiments might be necessary. Philip still kept moody and silent, Martha trembled. Had she unconsciously offended him? She hastily ran over in her mind her conduct towards him, from the first moment of their being acquainted, but was unable to remember any thing she had said or done likely to have caused her lover the slightest uneasiness. She was about to speak; her arm was linked in that of Philip's; he bent his head as if to gaze upon the fairy hand that rested on his arm, and Martha felt a tear drop on it. The warmest sympathies of her heart were excited. She saw that Philip was oppressed with and unable to control his feelings, and marking this, she exclaimed in accents of thrilling tenderness, "Dear, dear, Philip, what grieves you, tell me? Have I in any way offended you?"

The instant the liquid tones of the fair girl's voice fell on Philip's ear, he started as if he had awakened from a dream. For a moment all misgiving for the future, all care for the present, was forgotten; and raising her little hand hurriedly to his lips, he impressed on it a burning kiss. It was the first time he had ventured on such a liberty, and for a moment he felt as if he had been guilty of an indiscretion. Pre-

COLINTON DELL

sently, however, recovering his self-possession, he said, in accents of deep emotion—

"Forgive me, my dearest Martha, but I can no longer refrain from attempting to express in words those feelings with which I have regarded you ever since our first meeting, entertaining, as I do, a sad presentiment that this may be our last interview. I love you, Martha; truly, dearly, tenderly love you. You are my first, my only love; and I had begun to hope that one day I might be enabled to offer you a hand, which I was sanguine enough to believe might not be altogether unacceptable. A community of tastes and feelings I knew there existed between us; and under the impression that a union with you was not altogether hopeless, I have laboured hard to raise myself in the world, love giving every day new impulses to my industry. I have now no longer any grounds to believe that such a consummation is possible. You have this day been claimed and adopted as the heiress to a wealthy relative, and it is not to be expected that, under these altered circumstances, you can entertain the idea of becoming the wife of a village carpenter. Your views must be suited to the station in life you are now to occupy. Your relative will be anxious to have you connected with some family of distinction, and I will be left in loneliness and sadness to mourn my inability to purchase a pearl above all price, a jewel beyond all value."

Philip, while he thus expressed himself, had still retained Martha's hand, her lovely countenance the while varying in colour from deep crimson to ashy paleness. When Philip had spoken, Martha lifted her eyes from the ground, on which they had been bent, and gazing in the face of her lover, exclaimed, while the pearly tears coursed over her fair cheeks—

"Forbear, forbear, Philip Lauder, thus to pain and grieve me! You have given me every cause to respect, to esteem you. You have been my protector when surrounded by danger; my adviser, my guide, my friend, my companion, my brother. To you I owe my life, and it were idle affectation, worse than childish folly, in me to disguise, at such a moment as this, the real state of my feelings towards you. I need not say more than that I feel you love me, and love me sincerely. What my sentiments are towards you, you may guess."

"Ah, my dear Martha," said Philip, gazing on her with a look of tenderness and sorrow, "I cannot, I will not be selfish enough to expect that you, who are qualified to grace the highest circle, to adorn the highest station, should condescend to share the fortunes of a humble mechanic like myself."

"Philip Lauder!" exclaimed Martha, with animation, "Martha Forrester was born in humble life, in extreme poverty. Her thoughts, her feelings, her associations, are all with the poor and the humble, and let

come what come may, be assured that no inducement shall ever change her sentiments with regard to you, or make her give her hand but with her heart."

What heavenly melody, what angelic music was this to Philip's ear! How did he drink in every syllable that fell from Martha's lips? Nay, I am not by any means sure, that he did not with a desperate boldness imprint a long and burning kiss on those rosy lips ere the words had well passed them. Long, long did they linger on their way home; vows were exchanged between hearts and lips incapable of feeling or uttering aught but sincerity. Short, short did the time they had been together that evening seem. Yet, when they reached the widow's cottage, they found that she and the miller had been long home before them. Philip began to stammer out an apology, at which the widow smiled, and the miller laughed. Sprot and Waldie were also there; and the latter winking very significantly, gave utterance to his favourite expression, "See gin night;" while the former very provokingly chanted the following song:—

THE wee freckled cluds ower the blue lift are roamin',
The waves ripple light ower the sea,
An' the pearly mantle o' dark grey gloamin',
Fa's silkenly down upon me.
An' wow but my heart dances bounding an' light,
An' my bosom beats blythsome an' cheery,
When I see the black locks o' the pawky e'ed night,
That sae kindly haps me an' my dearie.

Your birdies and bardies may warble and sing,
An' praise the bright glories o' day,
But lovers, true lovers, can do nae sic thing,
For they weary till daylight's away.
Then in the lane glen whaur there's naething to start,
O! 'tis sweet when there's naebody near ye,
An' naething is heard but the beat o' your heart,
Echoed back by the heart o' your dearie.

O love, thou canst light the darkness o' night,
Thou canst brighten the mirkest hour;
An' a sweet stown kiss is an ocean o' bliss,
That drowns a' life's cares ower an' ower.
Then let him wha complains o' life's sorrows an' pains,
An' feels himsell dowie an' eerie,
Gae down the lane glen, an' let naebody ken,
But himsell an' his ain loving dearie.

CHAPTER XI.

When ye are puir naebody kens ye,—
When ye are rich a' body lends ye.
Proverb.

Before accompanying to Deanhouse Mr Forrester and Mr Archibald Cauldwell, a gentleman of whose character the reader already knows something, it may be proper to state the circumstance which had caused that worthy to make his appearance at the inn in Colinton, as formerly mentioned;—more especially as that circumstance is the means of bringing again forward our old friend Jack Cauldwell.

On the arrival of Mr Forrester at the smithy, as alluded to at the commencement of the previous chapter, the said smithy had rung with shouts of welcome loud enough to have alarmed a whole city. The villagers accordingly were soon on the alert, and the news flew like wildfire in every direction. Waldie, however, as if anxious, in his desire to torment old Cauldwell, to outrun even wildfire itself, rushed up to Deanhouse—dashed back the outer gate against the wall—flew down the avenue—tossed with his foot the pug-nosed dog who ran at him slap into the midst of a thorn-tree—and opening the house-door, bawled out with a voice that rang again through the large half empty house, "Hurrah! Deanhouse! The stranger's come! See gin night,"—and away he rushed.

The old laird was up stairs dressing, and, always jealous of Waldie's tricks, would not believe the news until after he had dispatched his barefooted messenger to the village, who, on her return, confirmed the smith's statement, and who related the particulars, so far as they could be gathered from hearsay, regarding the excursion to Colinton. Instantly, Cauldwell had resolved on following the stranger thither; and mounting his gallant grey, he had, with his usual sagacity, scented out the party at the inn, to whom he introduced himself in the manner already described.

Although Cauldwell was quick in his movements, these movements themselves were always the result of a coolly concerted plan; and on the present occasion he had all his arrangements made before he set out on his journey, and had determined on bringing the stranger home with him to Deanhouse. With this intention, he commissioned his old half-starved housekeeper to expend a whole fortnight's allowance in

purchasing something nice for supper; and as he also desired to make an impression in favour of his nephew, he dispatched a note to that young gentleman, informing him of what had happened, anticipating what was likely to take place, and requesting his company at Deanhouse in the evening.

In the meantime, it may not be amiss to look a little into the sayings and doings of that promising youth since we last met him, as well as to look for a moment at the peculiar predicament in which he was placed at the time his uncle's letter reached him.

One would have thought that, under his relative's auspices, Jack Cauldwell would have been busy paying court to Martha Forrester, and endeavouring to supplant Philip Lauder in her good graces. This was not the case, however; neither the venerable uncle nor the hopeful nephew had ever visited the widow at her cottage. It must not, however, be supposed that Jack was idle; on the contrary, he was busy enough in more ways than one. He was busy endeavouring to accomplish the ruin of Philip Lauder, and labouring to effect that by the agency of others which he had neither physical nor moral courage himself to attempt. Maillie, he knew, occasionally visited at the house of Mrs Forrester, where she was always launching out in praise of her darling Jack. This was, he thought, sufficient in the meantime. It kept him always before the widow and her daughter, and would enable him to push his suit if this rich relative, of whose return he and his uncle were now extremely doubtful, should, after all, make his appearance. Martha, without money, was no bargain for gay Jack; and although he continued to talk of her to Maillie in rapturous terms, his feelings were very little affected. Jack had also entire confidence in the sagacity of his worthy uncle. He knew well that Lauder had been entrapped into the Crooknook Mill building contract at rates much below what would pay; and he believed that his uncle, the laird of Deanhouse, would and could easily effect the ruin of the young man, whenever that event might be considered conducive to the furtherance of their interests. Thus situated, he patiently waited for an opportunity of pouncing on his prey, when there should be no way left for escape, although he had run considerably in arrears of bets to members of the Cockfighting Club, and other such joyous companions, on the faith of ultimately getting command of Martha's fortune, and of succeeding his uncle as laird of Deanhouse.

Jack's principal creditor was a boon companion of his own, a friend of his father's, and a partner in the banking establishment formerly alluded to. He was, in fact, no other than Mr Snacks, of Chance, Snacks & Co. For some time past, Jack had been getting impatient of the suspense in which he was kept, and several of his creditors were

importuning him for payment. Through the agency of his friend Mr Snacks, he had formerly drawn pretty largely on this accommodating banking establishment, and he resolved to make yet another effort to get a fresh supply of cash from the same quarter. Accordingly, on that very day on which the stranger arrived, and about the very hour when Deanhouse had dispatched his little billet to his promising nephew, that nephew entered the banking-house of Messrs Chance, Snacks and Company,—an establishment of which, by the way, it is perhaps time the reader should know something.

What gentlemanly young men these Messrs Chance, Snacks & Co. were! How smartly and cleverly business was managed in their elegant new banking-house! What a contrast did their young slap-up clerks, their new ledgers, their new mahogany counters, and their glittering brass railings, present to the old, worn-out, stayed tellers and quiet clerks in the dingy, old, dark banking-offices, situated in the back courts and dark alleys of the old town! What floods of light streamed in on these gay young men through those immense windows, proving that all the transactions in which they were engaged were honourable, inasmuch as they could be fearlessly exposed to the gaze of all the world! Who could be otherwise than captivated by the excessive politeness of these smart clerks and tellers, with their long dangling locks, ringed fingers, and fine ruffled shirt-sleeves, as they sat on their lofty stools, handing, with a cavalier and careless air, large sums of money across an immensely high, broad, shining, mahogany counter, or shoving about, with an air of philosophical and dignified indifference, huge piles of bank-notes or glittering heaps of gold and silver. On entering the bank, two large, clear polished safes stood before you, their ponderous doors secured in such a mysterious sort of way that they were never seen open; and it was believed that the redoubted Brodie himself would have been baffled had he attempted to pick them. How acute and sharp, too, were the checkers! Who could *do* them? Who dream of such a bank ever going wrong? Nobody. Nor was it in the least to be wondered at, that a bank, so managed, should be able to give a full per cent. more of interest than any of its old fashioned competitors.

The proprietors themselves were most affable and amiable young men, possessed of boundless wealth, and immense estates *somewhere*,—the exact locality of the latter not being very generally known. These gentlemen did not, however, confine themselves much to the banking-house, but were more frequently seen accompanying the hounds of the Edinburgh Foxhunting Club. In a morning, indeed, when on their way to their favourite amusement, the foxhunting bankers would look into the office for five minutes, and, in that short space of time, did these

clever fellows do all the business required of them for the day. How easily these gay sparks arranged their immense concerns! and what a contrast between the life they led, and that of the anxious, persevering contractors for Crooknook Mill.

On the present occasion, Jack was fortunate enough to find his friend Mr Snacks at home, who, perceiving that Jack looked rather lugubrious, sympathisingly asked him, "How the game stood?"

"All up," answered Jack, "I am finished, fairly strapped, pared to the back-bone, soused over head and ears in debt. My dibs are out, and I have come to solicit your sympathy in the shape of a fresh supply."

"I'm afraid, my dear fellow," said Mr Snacks, "that I can't do any thing more in that way for you, unless on better security. Your uncle bids fair to outlive you; and this girl Forrester's relative seems to have disappeared altogether; no word of him yet?"

"Expected daily, hourly," replied Jack, "and then clear decks, rub out your chalk marks with lumps of gold; that's the go, eh?" and Jack rubbed his hands with great glee.

"Ah, my dear fellow," rejoined Snacks, "rumour sayeth, that the carpenter you despise so much, is deep in the good graces of both widow and daughter. Women have strong influence over men; and a pretty young woman can make an old fellow do any thing she likes. This old fellow, if he do come, may be disposed to befriend Lauder, and you may lose the chance. You ought to get your rival out of the way immediately. Indeed you ought to have beat him to a jelly long before now."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Jack, "what folly were it in me to elevate this vulgar artizan into an equal by engaging in a personal quarrel with him, particularly when you, my dear friend, have him so entirely in your power. Let him build away. Let Messrs Lauder and Hastie labour away like brute beasts as they are. How does their joint cash-account stand now?"

"All drawn," answered Snacks, "every penny."

"Ha, ha!" chuckled Jack, "how are they to get through, eh?"

"Through! they will never get through,'" replied Snacks; "the money they have drawn has all been expended on the work, and there is not enough done to pay the outlay. A bankruptcy soon, no doubt.'

"Ah, ha! very likely," exclaimed Jack exultingly, "what else could have been expected. Cunning old fox, uncle. He'll take care to be no loser at any rate. He'll have full value for his money out of them, I warrant you."

"All snug, indeed," said Snacks, "he has a receipt from Lauder and Hastie, acknowledging that all the money they have drawn from the

bank is in payment of the work done at Crooknook Mill. In the meantime things look well enough—the young men push away bravely—timber merchants and quarry owners press them for orders—a mass of these materials are now being used, which are not paid for—the contract prices will not nearly pay—the young men will fail to meet their engagements—your uncle gets a cheap job at the expense of others—and the contractors, with all their exertions, are ruined. Your rival"—

"He'll have his feet made fast," said Jack, finishing the sentence, "and the coast will be left clear for me, to pay my addresses to Martha Forrester, whenever her relative returns. Uncle will manage all well. A clever old fellow, Deanhouse."

"Ay," muttered Snacks, as Jack stepped towards the door of the apartment, to receive a letter from the long-necked letter-carrier, who has been already introduced to the reader. "Ay," repeated Snacks to himself, "and clever fellows, too, are young Messrs Chance, Snacks & Co., as old Deanhouse will by and bye find to his cost."

The letter which Jack received, was the one formerly mentioned, as having been sent by his uncle, previous to his setting out for Colinton to join the stranger. The girl had carried it direct to the Post-office, and Jack's black-whiskered associate, who suspected it to be of consequence, had dispatched his long-necked subordinate to the banking-house of Chance, Snacks & Co., at which place, on leaving the office, Jack had left word he would be found if wanted.

When the hopeful and aspiring heir to the Cauldwell estates had glanced over his uncle's epistle, which informed him of the stranger's arrival, and invited him to Deanhouse that afternoon, for the purpose of being introduced to him, a sudden change in the expression of his countenance indicated, to the keen eye of Mr Snacks, that this was some important communication. With his right hand, Jack lifted his hat to the very summit of his sconce, then advancing to Snacks with measured step, he placed his left hand in his left side, and handing the letter to his friend, exclaimed, "now, my boy, give me joy, the deed's done, aint it, no objection now to advance me another cool hundred on my chance, eh? Double interest if you like, but must have the money—must be swellish—attract old gentleman's eye, and dazzle Martha with the brilliancy of my plumage. What say you? To be or not to be—cash or chaos—light or darkness—salvation or destruction—say, speak quickly!"

"My dear fellow," said Snacks, "you know well that I have all along been your friend in this matter, and I give you joy of the prospect now fairly opened up, of a successful termination to all your dif-

ficulties. My private purse is, as it has been, at your service; draw on me at pleasure."

"Good, kind, generous Snacks!" exclaimed Jack, you shall be repaid ,ay tenfold; come then," he continued, "we'll complete this business, and not a word to uncle or father; not a syllable."

"Do you take me for a pimp, Jack?" said Snacks. "You know, my dear fellow, my reluctance to divulge unnecessarily any thing to anybody. My reason for supplying you from my private purse is to keep the matter secret from your relatives. They are, you know, partners in the bank, and it might have been awkward had they, in the course of a book examination, found you a debtor. Close fisted men both, they have no sympathy with young minds. They don't know what it takes to keep a young man's pocket. I do; hence my anxiety to help you. By the bye, shall we meet in the evening? You know you were to introduce me to-night to the Edinburgh Cock-fighting Club. I am anxious to become a member."

"A member! you shall be president, my buck," said Jack. "My chums there will be so proud of you, they wont allow you to remain long a private member. Excellent fellows they all are—fond of betting, quietly—never quarrel."

"Ah! that is the society I love, my trump card," said Snacks; "men who get through their work calmly and smoothly—who don't cry like lollaboys when they are minus a trifle, and who pocket their winnings as quietly as they disburse their losings—in the same way as you and I transact business," concluded Mr Snacks, handing over the sum wanted, together with a receipt for Jack to sign.

"Good, kind, generous Snacks," repeated Jack, as he pocketed the money, and adhibited his honoured name to the receipt. "Good bye. We shall meet at the 'Cat and Bagpipe,'—nine o'clock. I shall leave the old men at Deanhouse early, under pretence of having to attend my office duties. Good bye;" and away went Jack, to prepare for his visit to his uncle;—while Snacks turned up his private note-book, and began to calculate the amount of gain likely to be realized from his transactions with gay Jack.

CHAPTER XII.

The ocean ebbs, the ocean flows,
The flower buds, and the flower blows.

WE have now to accompany Mr Forrester and old Cauldwell in their ride home from Colinton, where, the reader will recollect, we left them.

"Well, Mr Forrester," said Deanhouse, after they had proceeded a little on their way, "How d'ye like the old country again, eh? Not much difference here since you and I were wont to scramble among these bushes. Greater changes on us than on them."

"Yes," said Forrester; "but, like us, these bushes have gone and come. All nature changes. The old gives place to the young. Every thing finite must fade and die; the Infinite alone remains for ever: and Infinitude pervades all, broods over all, fills all. Hence, the principle of life is eternal, a portion of the Infinite; and there is a continual progression of mind, an extension of life, though in varied forms, in all times, throughout all space. And although the place that knew us shall know us no more, the place remains, and some one arises in our stead. Thus, you perceive, that my dear departed foster-brother hath left me a memorial in his angelic daughter—and what a beautiful creature she is!"

"A beautiful creature she is, indeed," exclaimed Cauldwell. "Never saw so perfect a woman at so early an age. Must look out for a good match; she'll take a good market. Mustn't be thrown away on common clay, eh?"

"I should certainly like to see her well mated, and elevated to that station in life which she is so well qualified to adorn. But I suspect she is attached to that youth, your protegée. He seems an excellent young man. I caught them exchanging glances and blushes, and I could not be so cruel as be the cause of separating two hearts formed for each other."

"Formed for each other! Pooh! Nonsense!" exclaimed Dean-

house, impatiently. "No two beings more unlike. She, an heiress, beautiful and accomplished; he, a plodding mechanic, with more ambition than ability, more sail than ballast. Wish he were through with my building."

"I see no danger of that," said Forrester. "He seems a very active, clever fellow. The work is apparently rapidly progressing. Your patronage must be of use to him. Mr Flemyng gives him a high character;—tells me he is well employed, and sure to rise rapidly in his profession."

"Ah, Flemyng partial to the young man," said Deanhouse; "partiality, you know, produces blindness to the imperfections and faults of its objects, eh? Through Flemyng's recommendation I employed him; gave him and partner cash-account to help them. Cash all drawn; work far behind. Don't look well. Must be extravagance somewhere, eh?"

"Indeed," said Forrester, "I am exceedingly sorry to hear such a bad account from you; but are you sure that you are paying the young men a fair price for their work?"

This was hitting Drawwell hard, though unknowingly; but that gentleman was not to be put out by such chance thrusts. Accordingly, without a moment's hesitation, he exclaimed, with great earnestness, "No, my dear Sir; no. I have given them every advantage; given them the same prices as a most respectable and extensive builder offered to do my work for. Gave the young men the preference because they were young men."

"Ah! well," said Forrester, now quite satisfied that Cauldwell was one of the most generous of men, "you could not be expected to be more liberal under any circumstances; and yet you say they have drawn more cash than they have produced work for. This looks very ill; there must be something wrong."

"Must be, and is," said Cauldwell. "Must not throw away your niece on one on highway to ruin; see your bounty squandered away. No, no. Help you to better match for Martha. My nephew, Jack, smart fellow, my heir; Deanhouse his portion. Father rich also, eh? Will Jack do, eh?"

"This is not the young man who fights cocks, I hope," said Forrester. "I detest gambling in every shape, and far more especially when it is allied with such brutal cruelty."

"Nonsense! Mustn't believe Coal Jock," said Cauldwell; "a reputed liar, a crony of Flemyng and village smith, who, since your former visit, have been boasting largely of your friendship, on which account Lauder has been paying court to them; and they have been doing all they can to exalt him into a hero. Low, vulgar people, all of

them, anxious to elevate their own order. That lie anent my nephew, fabricated by Jock, knowing it would please miller, who now employs him. My nephew superior lad altogether. Has loved the girl long, and ere he knew that she had any expectancy of becoming wealthy. She was governess in my brother's family, and Jack was expelled from his father's house for avowing an attachment to her. I was pleased with his disinterestedness, and took him under my protection."

"Indeed! Well that was generous on both your parts," said Forrester, "and I feel more deeply than I can express the obligation. I must see your nephew."

"So you shall, my dear friend," said Deanhouse. "I expect him at my house this evening. I almost anticipate he will be awaiting our arrival. He is very modest, and gains much, very much, on acquaintance. All modest men do, eh?" and the worthy old gentleman looked as if he felt that he himself was the very pink and perfection of modesty.

"Ah," said Forrester, "I like him all the better for that quality. If he can gain Nanda's affections, there is a prospect of us becoming near relatives, Deanhouse. Strange changes time brings about! Strange, if the orphan daughter of the village millwright should be united to the heir of the landlord of the village, the proprietor of this beautiful old mansion-house!" And while he yet spake, they reached the front of Deanhouse, and were assisted to alight from their horses by the immaculate Mr John Cauldwell.

After being introduced by old Cauldwell to his very promising nephew, Mr Forrester was ushered into Cauldwell's little sanctum at Deanhouse, where supper soon made its appearance, under the joint auspices of the ancient housekeeper and her bare-footed assistant. Supper was a rare thing in that house; but the laird's faithful domestic, who had been instructed by her kind master to spare neither cost nor labour in getting something rather recherché, had taken full advantage of her license, and had succeeded in producing a very savoury repast. Perhaps some of the dishes were rather high seasoned; but this, Cauldwell said, arose from an anxiety on the part of his housekeeper to induce thirst, so that the wine in the cellar, which was now getting somewhat musty, might be reduced in quantity. "But, come," he continued to Mr Forrester, "a glass of wine, if you please, Sir? Genuine old port, fourteen years in bottle, vintage '76. Heavy stock; can't get quit of it,—live plain here, you see, Mr Forrester, plain and cheap—hate display—single man—keep little company. All the better for Jack here, one day. Young dog makes me an old man. He will be marrying soon, and making me look still older, by making me granduncle to some half score of white-headed varlets. Well, well; world must be

peopled. Must keep up the old family stock, Jack ; must marry soon, lad."

Jack turned his eyes on the floor, and seemed much agitated. A blush overspread his countenance, and he looked the very impersonation of modesty and bashfulness. He evidently felt deeply affected, and he stretched forth his hand to fill a tumbler with water, by way of cooling his qualmish trepidation. Instead of the water, however, Jack seized the wine decanter, and filled his glass to the brim, which he was hurrying to his lips, apparently unconscious of the mistake he had committed, when his facetious uncle observing him, exclaimed, "What, Jack! about to pledge your love in a bumper, or drown it in the bowl, eh? Might have asked us to join you, eh? Impart to us the fair charmer's name. Give us old boys a chance. Sly fellow, Jack ; wishes to keep her to himself. She'll be some high-born damsel, no doubt,—come of an ancient family, eh, Jack?"

"I beg pardon, uncle," stammered out Jack ; "but in the presence of one so nearly related to the lady in whom you well know all my hopes are centred, it is rather inconsiderate of you to allude to that circumstance. Yet," he continued, as he seemed struggling hard to shake off the bashfulness which overwhelmed him, "why should I hesitate to declare before any one those sentiments, for expressing which I incurred the displeasure of my worthy father—those sentiments of respectful esteem, of devoted affection, I entertain for Martha, the daughter of poor Widow Forrester."

"Ah, ha, Jack!" exclaimed his delighted uncle. "All up with you there, now. Far too modest and backward. Told you so. Philip Lauder will carry off that charming girl. Village carpenter will cut out heir to village landlord. Pleasure party at Colinton to-day ; lovers away home together, down by the water-side, talking soft things all the way, no doubt. You are out there ; fairly out, Jack. Modest, retiring Jack, no match for sturdy, fearless, forward Philip, eh? Love in a cottage, eh? True and happy hearts in humble life, eh, Mr Forrester?"

This intelligence, communicated as it was through his uncle's sarcastic speech, threw Jack, for the moment, entirely off his guard. His brow darkened, and, with compressed lips, he uttered the word "Indeed!" in a tone of supreme contempt. Instantly, however, he checked himself, and with an affectation of extreme pity, sighed forth in dolorous accents, "Poor Lauder! I pity him ; truly and sincerely pity him, and all those who are or may become in any way closely connected with him. Poor fellow! he will soon be unfit to rival any one either in business or in love."

"Indeed!" thundered Forrester, with an energy he had not be-

fore exhibited, and which let the worthy uncle and nephew perceive the necessity there was for being very guarded in their conversation. "Indeed!" he repeated, "is there any thing wrong with Lauder? Has he done anything to disgrace himself, or those connected with him. Answer me quickly, and to the point, I pray you."

Jack sat silent, as if unwilling to say more, shook his head, and again sighed, "Poor Lauder!"

Old Cauldwell now affecting to be angry at Jack's hesitation, exclaimed, in a loud voice, while his eyes flashed fire, "Come, come, Sir, no croaking; mustn't insinuate evil against any one. Give voice; speak out; tell us what's wrong with Philip Lauder."

Thus importuned, nay, commanded, by his uncle—and this was exactly what Jack had been driving at—he said, in the same mournful manner as formerly, "My dear uncle, you will soon enough learn the evil tidings. I heard to-day from Messrs Chance, Snacks and Company, bankers, that they had, chiefly on the strength of your recommendation, discounted several bills on Lauder and Hastie; that several of these bills are due to-morrow, and that the cash-account which you gave the young men to commence business with has been all drawn. You already know that the value of the work executed at Crooknook Mill will not amount to the sum you have already advanced them. They have no other job of any extent going on; and, of course, they have no alternative but to become bankrupt."

"Bankruptcy! Disgraceful!" shouted old Cauldwell. "You astonish, you petrify me, Jack. What! have I been patronising, employing, dishonest men? Shameless villains! Bankrupts, eh?"

"Not in all cases," mildly interposed Mr Forrester; "not in all cases, Mr Cauldwell. There is a distinction to be drawn between the knave who seeks to defraud his creditors, and the honest man who, in consequence of losses from unforeseen causes, over which he could have had no controul, is not only ruined himself, but unable to meet the demands which others may have against him. We should always be careful to draw the distinction, although I am afraid your remarks are but too well merited in the present instance. These young men have not been long in business; according to all accounts they worked hard, had a good share of trade, and could not, in this locality, have sustained many losses from bad debts or otherwise."

"No bad debts here, Sir," said old Cauldwell, "not a shilling. My job, which you saw in progress to-day—capital paying job. Have been told so over and over again, by parties who wished they had it at a much lower figure than I gave Lauder and Hastie. What can they have made of the money? Old proverb—'Set beggar on horseback, he'll ride to the devil,' eh? Extravagance! Wrong, very wrong!"

"Wrong!" echoed Mr Forrester. "Such a term is not strong enough to apply to such conduct. It is a combination of black ingratitude and base dishonesty. I must inquire forthwith into this matter. No fraudulent bankrupt shall ever marry niece of mine. A poor village carpenter might have become wealthy through the fair exercise of talent and industry. Poverty is no crime, and a man cannot help being born poor; but this young man who has made such a false step at his first entrance into business, can never recover his position. He must either have been culpably neglectful, or he has betrayed the trust reposed in him; and in either case, he is alike guilty of criminal dishonesty. I do not think it possible that a girl possessing such sterling sense and sound principles as my dear niece, can ever give any encouragement to this fellow after such an occurrence. It is right, however, that they should be separated. Reason has little chance against feeling, and the feelings of the young always outstrip their judgment. The welfare of my dear girl must be secured; and, to say the truth, I am not ill pleased that this has happened. My good friend, the miller, can now have no ground on which to urge the claims of this young man Lauder to my attention, and I shall see the wish of my heart accomplished, my charming niece elevated to the rank in society which she is so well qualified to adorn;" and here Jack Cauldwell thought the old man regarded him with peculiar complacency, as he continued, addressing himself to old Cauldwell, "You must assist me to look out for a residence some little way distant, to which I can remove my sister and niece immediately. I should like to set out to-morrow."

"To-morrow, eh? Quick work you military men make," said the delighted Cauldwell, "right about face, quick march, halt, fire, charge,—and the deed's done, eh? Old volunteer—know all about it, eh? Hey, Jack, my lad, your father still has bond and security on that house of Thorniedell. Beautiful spot, near Roslin; classic ground, eh? Convenient distance from Edinburgh. Can get it cheap. Could go up to-morrow morning, breakfast with brother, take a drive out—see it. Eye your merchant. All ready furnished; can take trial of it for summer. Brother will make you welcome to it for season free."

"My good friend," said Forrester, "this is kind, exceedingly kind. I shall go with you in the morning to your brother's, and should like also to take my dear sister and niece along with us. A bankrupt carpenter marry my niece—Pshaw!"

"Rather out of keeping, eh?" chuckled old Cauldwell, delighted with the turn matters had taken. "You and I will be off early in the morning. Jack will come down, get out family coach; your horse run in harness? Yours and mine make capital match; good vehicle—never much used in my day—will hold us all capitally. Jack can drive

like a Jehu, eh? Jack call for Martha and mother—villagers crowd to see Martha in her carriage. Her own yet. Ah! sly rogue, Jack," he continued, as he gave his loving nephew a poke in the ribs with the end of his toddy-laddle, "come away. Another bowl; merry night, Mr Forrester; young again. Jack and I will see you all right in the morning; shan't we, Jack, eh?"

Jack protested that he lived but to serve his uncle and Mr Forrester, the uncle of her whom he adored so much, that had he ten lives they were all at her disposal. Mr Forrester was delighted with Jack's apparent candour and simplicity; and so far as the happiness of Martha was concerned, the three new friends were seemingly of one mind, and heart, and soul. The punch went round again and again, although Jack excused himself from dipping deeply, by stating that he had to attend the Post-Office duties, for which he left, after chaunting the following song at his uncle's request, and by way of making, as he said, "their old hearts young."

AIR.—When she came ben.

We've a' ta'en the rue, an' grown callants again;
We've a' ta'en the rue, an' grown callants again:
Man's honour is folly, his wisdom is vain—
We've ta'en a new thought, an' grown callants again.

We'll aff to fair Roslin, an' sweet Habbie's How,
By fairy led streamlet, and castle-crowned knowe;
We'll climb the high Pentlands, without pech or grane,—
The green hills will mak us a' callants again.

O, wha wad hae wisdom that comes when ye're auld?
An' wha wad hae honours that bend ye twa-fauld?
Man grows till a sage, an' a sage till a wean—
Sae we've ta'en a new lease, an' grown callants again.

Thus man wad be callant, an' callant be man;
We shouther through life a' as canny's we can;—
The best way ava's ne'er to mak ony mane,
But loup, kick the ba', an' grow callants again.

O, manhood gains glory, an' age gathers gear,
But bairn time has joys that the heart aye hauds dear;
An' wadna the loun be right bauld to complain,
Wha can cast aff his age, and grow callant again?

Mr John Cauldwell had other, and far more important business, to transact on that eventful evening than Post-Office business. He had to attend a meeting of the Cockfighting Club, for the twofold purpose of witnessing a cock-fight, and of introducing his friend Mr Snacks, of the firm of Chance, Snacks & Co. as a candidate for the honour of becoming a member of the worthy fraternity. Jack found Mr Snacks, awaiting him in the room at the Post-Office occupied by his friend of the black whiskers, who, in consequence of Jack's engagement, was kept confined for the evening. This was nothing between two such close friends, and was no more than Jack had done for him a hundred times, and was ready to do so as often again. It was with an air of triumph, and in a tone of great self-complacency, that Jack made his anxious friends aware of the result of his day's proceedings—a result with which they were as much delighted as he possibly could be. Black whiskers absolutely danced and leaped with joy; and Mr Snacks offered him the half of the gold in the Bank of England, if he required it. "By the bye," continued that gentleman, "we must not forget business. I have delayed giving these young men, Lauder and Hastie, notice, until the last moment, that your uncle had no intention of advancing them any additional money to-morrow; but had resolved that the cash-account should be considered as payment for work done. I have delayed sending this notice to them until the last moment, so that they may be taken by surprise, and may not be able, by any means, to raise the requisite sum to lift the bills due to-morrow, and save their credit. It is necessary now, however, that I should write them; our bank enjoys the credit of being liberal to young beginners, and even one instance of harshness might damage our character. Can you find any one to deliver the note to-night? I should like it delivered to-night, however late. In fact, the later the better."

"There is no post there to-night," said Tom.

"I have it," said Jack; "Coal Jock is to be at the club to-night—he will take it down with him when he goes home. I can do any thing I like with him—close, confidential messenger."

Matters thus arranged, Mr Snacks wrote the note, and the friends proceeded to the Cockfighting Club, where they arrived just in time to see another display of that cruel pastime, which has been formerly described. Coal Jock was, as usual, busy in his vocation. Unknown to his employer Flemyng, he had that day, while waiting on the party at Colinton, picked up a pair of real Spanish bantams, between which a murderous conflict had just closed, when Jock, turning round to Cauldwell, said in a tone expressive of mingled irony and waggery—

"What, Mr Cauldwell, are ye aye in the line yet? Your auld uncle declares that ye're an altered man—he wad fain hae your wings clippit—

my sang he doesna ken the flights ye tak. He's sharp enough in the spurs himsell, but he canna kill wi' a flap o' the wing like you. 'Od, I wad like to hae him here, we wad gie the auld buffer some insight."

"You better go and bring him, Jock," said Cauldwell, "the company here will be delighted with his eccentricities."

"Ay, and will I bring up your new friend wi' him? Yon queer auld birkie, Mr Forrester, he and his nicce wad be unco proud to see ye in the only place you can be seen to advantage in. Miss Forrester wad gang daft about ye gin she kenned ye were a cockfighter."

Cauldwell sprang across the room to the side of the speaker, and eagerly whispered in his ear—"For the love of heaven, Jock, and if ever you expect to have charge of Deanhouse game, breathe not a syllable of this to any one. Recollect all here repose implicit confidence in you; and if you dare even to whisper my name in connection with aught here, be assured you shall rue it. You are now about to return home, I perceive: I shall be kept here with my friend some little time yet. Here is a note which you will be kind enough to deliver either to-night or early in the morning to Lauder, the village carpenter; and here is a silver half-crown for your trouble. Be silent, remember Mum's the word," placing his forefinger on his lip, "mind that, Jock."

"Ay, close as death," said Jock. "Gudenight to ye a'," he continued, addressing those around the table, as he shouldered his bag, and tipped off a bumper of raw whisky, which Jack had filled out for him. "Gudenight, an' mony thanks to ye a' atweell," he repeated, as he stalked out at the door, followed by the professed good wishes of the company. "Ay, Mr Cauldwell, bide ye a wee, lad," he muttered to himself, as he ascended the alley that led to the High Street, "I'll gaur ye look blae enough by and bye. I'll claw your kaim some day, when you're no expeckin't. Ye shall ne'er marry Martha Forrester, gin Coal Jock can help it; and what can he no do when he likes?" and with that he made the crack of his whip, his constant companion, resound through the dark alley, until he was arrested by a sort of half-whistle, and the sound of a voice exclaiming, "Hilloa, man! Stop, man! Gie ower, man! Wha are you, man! Redd the close, man!"

"Am I no redding the close as fast as I can?" said Jock. "Come awa' man, Twopenny. Wha could expeck to see you here? What are ye seeking?"

"Mextyfu me, Jock! is this you? How hae ye been livin' this age? Hae ye been at the club? Is young Cauldwell there?"

The person who thus accosted Jock, was no other than the same long-necked postman, who, it will be remembered, made his appearance in the room at the ever-memorable breakfast at lawyer Cauldwell's, and who, unconsciously, was the means of letting the cat out of the bag

anent young Cauldwell's irregular habits. Twopenny Tam, for such was the soubriquet of this singular personage, was a character in his way. He had a habit of prefacing every sentence he uttered with a whew! a sort of shrill clear whistle, not unlike the sound emitted at starting by an oppressed and overloaded steam-engine. Each of these whews was accompanied by a peculiar twinkle of the left eyelid; and when Twopenny had any communication to make of a confidential nature, the whew became more subdued, the twinkle more sly, close, and peculiar, and the eye itself emitted a sort of electric spark, by way of giving evidence of the fire concealed within. He had been long in the establishment, and was a sort of walking directory, to whom reference was made on most occasions when a difficulty occurred in finding out the residence of any citizen. Jock and he were old acquaintances. His vocation kept him out late at night, and many a comfortable jorum had they had together, when John was in the coal-trade. Twopenny's services had been secured by John while he had been in search of Widow Forrester's residence, and the good soul had exerted himself to the utmost in that instance, although altogether without success. The friends had not met for some time, and Jock answered the double question anent Cauldwell and himself, by saying, in his heartiest manner—"I'm geyly, brawly, Tam. An' how are ye, yoursell—an' how hae ye been—and what are ye wanting wi' Jack Cauldwell?"

"Whew! I hae been just jogging on in the auld way, Jock; and I hae a note for Cauldwell," said Twopenny—as his voice sank to a whisper, and his eye gave a sly twinkle, "Is he there?"

"Ay, troth is he," said Jock, "and he'll continue there a while, I'm thinking. He has brought a new chum wi' him yonder the night; and gin he's no a' the aulder farrant, they'll hae him bare enough or they're done wi' him. But, 'od man, Tam, ye maun lend me your leather pouch, I hae turned letter-carrier, ay, and hae gotten half-a-crown frae Jack Cauldwell to carry this bit note down to a neighbour aside us yonder. My sang, it's a mair profitable job carrying letters than carting meal, or selling coals."

"Whe-w! what?" exclaimed Twopenny, "Has Jack Cauldwell gien ye a half-crown? Gudefaith he maun be expeckin' something for't, or ye wadna hae gotten't. I ne'er in my life could squeeze half-a-crown out o' the hale Cauldwell family."

"But here it is, ye see," said Jock, holding up the silver piece between his forefinger and thumb to the dim light of a twinkling lamp in the alley. "There is the real white siller. Gude to me gude to a' the warld. Folk should aye rooze the ford as they find it. Come awa', I'll gie ye a dram aff't, to drink the health o' the donor. We should aye encourage weel-doin'."

"Wi' a' my heart," said Twopenny. "I'm starvin' o' cauld hangin' on till this late hour in that hole o' an office o' ours. An't werena for black Tam an' game Jack, as they ca' ane anither, I might be hame every night lang ere this time. But they've aye some black gate to send me. I was sent wi' this note e'eunow to Jack, in an unco hurry. But black Tam maun just wait till his betters are served."

"Black Tam! wha's he?" asked Jock. "No in the coal tred?"

"Whe-w!" answered Twopenny, "he drives a blacker tred than selling coals. He's a clerk in our office, an' ane o' the biggest rips in Edinbro."

"Ay, man," said Jock, "like aye draws to like. Jack Cauldwell winna be muckle ahint him, I'm thinkin'."

"Whe-w! as like as twa peas," said Twopenny. "They are sworn brithers in mischief, and a precious pair they are. There's naething ower low for them—cowardly, cauld-blooded blackguards. Ah! man, Jock, gin ye kenned what I ken about their tricks in the office, ye wad say that hanging is ower gude for them."

"An' gin ye ken sae muckle ill about them," exclaimed Jock, "what for do ye no tell? Out wi' 't, man. Tell the truth an' shame the devil."

"Whe-w!" ejaculated Twopenny. "Tell the truth, and be proved a liar. Gin I were yelpin', they wad set a trap for me, and I wad be sent ower the seas for their dishonesty. My poor, honest neebour, that was, they sent aff last year; but their time's comin' yet, when they'll get tit-for-tat. I bide my time. I'm watchin' them. Close, close, John, close," and here long-necked Tom closed his eye slowly, and most expressively, as he continued, "I see naething, do I?"

"I'll be hanged gin I think you're blind, mair nor me," said Jock, "Ye can see through a millstane as well as ony body else, I'll warrant ye."

"Blind!" exclaimed Twopenny, "whe-w! I wish whiles I were blind, John, I wadna hae a sair heart sae often. 'Od, man, it gaurs my verra flesh a grue whiles to see the cauldblooded tricks o' that scoundrel, Black Tam. He can tell ye what's in a letter by just lookin' at the outside o't. Ay, and wyle out in a twinkling frae a big bagfu' ilka letter that has a pund note in 't. Gin it be directed to some puir bodie, aiblins a puir feckless widow, sae muckle the better, sae muckle less the chance o' being deteckit. He whomles out the ends, pu's out the siller, refaulds the letter again, and sends it aff empty without ae crumple in't." Here's till ye, Jock, and ilka honest man, an' confusion to a' dishonesty an' double dealing."

The two friends dispatched more than one dram each ere they parted, and discussed at full length the merits and demerits of "Black

Tom" and "Game Jack." Jock described in his own peculiar style the charming Martha Forrester, and Twopenny winked and whe-ewed, and declared that he would "gang through fire an' water to prevent sic an angel frae being thrown awa on sic a worthless fellow as Jack Cauldwell." The two friends renewed their friendly protestations, and formed a new league, which was duly cemented by an extra glass; —after which Jock set off on his way home, and Twopenny to the Edinburgh Cockfighting Club, to deliver the note which he had in charge to Mr John Cauldwell.

When Twopenny entered the room, Mr John Cauldwell was busily engaged in a pleasant game at loo with Mr Snacks and another veteran gambler, and Twopenny had not only to deliver himself of several whe-ews! but was obliged to touch his illustrious friend on the shoulder, ere he could obtain his notice. Having at length effected this, the latter broke the seal of the note with a cool and careless manner, and began to read it in a drawling sort of way, as if his eye, and not his mind, was engaged in the perusal. Suddenly, however, his countenance changed its expression, his brow darkened—his looks were for a moment rivetted on the writing, and the next they were fixed on Twopenny, as if they could have pierced him through—while tearing the note to tatters, he exclaimed—

"Where the devil have you been, Sir! that you have taken an hour to come from the next street with this important communication? Such conduct, is more than your place or your neck is worth, you drunken brute!" and he dashed the fragments of the note in Twopenny's face, and, without taking time to excuse himself to his friends, he lifted his stakes from the table on which they lay, seized his hat, and rushed out of the room.

"What's the matter?" enquired Snacks at the old veteran. "What's the matter, Twopenny?" said the hoary gambler. "He has left the game unfinished, will you play his hand out?"

"I ne'er touched the deel's buiks a' my days," replied Twopenny, as he gathered up the crumbs of the note which were scattered about, "and I'm no gaun to begin now. Foolish, fiery callant, to scatter bits o' paper ower sic a fine, clean, tidy floor. I think shame o' him. Gude night wi' ye a', I maun gang after him;" and away went the postman, not indeed to the Post-office, but home to his ancient domicile—of which more hereafter—where he spent the greater portion of the night in arranging these crumbs of paper, and in pasting them together. The contents were truly of importance to poor Twopenny, and he hugged himself in having at last obtained a piece of evidence which might be useful in protecting himself, and in exposing the villainy of the quondam associates "Black Tom," and "Game Jack."

CHAPTER XIII.

Rise when the day daws,
Bed when the night fa's.
Proverb.

What a lovely morning was that on which, at an early hour, Coal Jock, on his way to Flemyng's mill, walked over to Philip Lauder's workshop, to deliver the note with which he had been entrusted. Pale pinky clouds lay blushing in the sky, or stretching across it, like flower-beds on a field of deep blue ether. Far, far upward, the lark, reduced to a speck by the distance, was seen soaring on unwearied wing, up, up—as if to meet and welcome the first bright peep of morning, and charming, with his gladsome song, the dreary darkness of night away. Clearly and beautifully defined was every house, bank, and brae in and around the primitive little village of the Water of Leith. Here and there the smoke began to ascend from the chimneys, but in a straggling and hesitating manner, as if unwilling to blot or blur so fair and so pure a scene. By and bye strong stalwart millers, carters, and ploughmen, came forth from their laigh-lintled doors, and trudged away to the scene of their labours. Large, heavy, drowsy, full-fed horses, were led out from their stables, and roused by the smart thwack of the long-lashed whip, or the "*gee up*" of their drivers, stalked along the little street, their chains and harness rattling and ringing with noisy clank. Old women in *toys* were seen peeping through their little windows, their reprobate cats rubbing themselves coaxingly against the glass on the outside, as if endeavouring to make up matters, and apologising for having been abroad all night. Blooming lasses came forth in bands with milk-pails and *leglins*, and not a few of them returned the "blythe morning" of honest John, with an echo of the words, repeated in the kindest, sweetest, and gentlest tones. Labour had again begun, and another day was about to be added to the long series of the past.

Jock found Philip Lauder already busily engaged at work. On seeing him, the latter, somewhat astonished at such an early visit, exclaimed, "What, John, early astir this morning! I thought you would have been fatigued with yesterday's excursion."

"Fatigued!" said Jock, "houts, man, I was in Embro' for twa three hours last night after I parted wi' you; an' here's a letter I gat frae a gentleman there to gie you. A gude job, I hope. Eh, man, Philip!

Martha lookit bonny yesterday, as she linkit awa in your arm through the wood; 'od she made my mou' a' water, man—ye had a rich armfu'—tak care o' her, Philip; but I maun awa to the mill, Deanhangh will be waiting me. Gude morning."

When Philip had read Snacks' letter, he was horrified. This was the day which he had looked forward to with sanguine expectation. He and Hastie were to have drawn their first instalment, and to have paid their quarrymaster and timber merchant's bills,—bills which had been discounted by Messrs Chance, Snacks, & Co., and which were that day due. Now Cauldwell had withdrawn his name from the cash-account; the money they had drawn stood in place of the first instalment, and poor Philip and his partner could not pay their bills. The idea of becoming bankrupt was so repugnant to the feelings of Lauder, that he could not contemplate it for a moment; and snatching up his hat, and leaving the shop to look after itself, he rushed away to Coltbridge, to consult with Hastie.

Hastie, poor fellow, was even worse than Philip when the news were communicated to him. He had less command of himself, less firmness of mind than his partner; and he ran hither and thither in a dreadful state of excitement—now cursing his own stupidity—now abusing old Cauldwell—calling him an old, grinding, and swindling miser. What was to be done? What could be done? He could not face it out—he could not hear his name mentioned as a bankrupt—he would leave the country. What would become of his old mother?—and here the poor fellow burst into tears.

Hastie's agitation and distress tended to make Lauder more cool and collected. He exhorted Hastie to patient endurance, and held out hopes to him which he himself scarcely dared to entertain. "After all," he said, "this may prove only a temporary misfortune;" and he suggested that they should go together to old Cauldwell, and endeavour to persuade him to renew their cash-account, and pay them their instalment. "He had no doubt," he continued, "that if they could effect this, they would be able to pay every one plack and farthing when the building was completed, and preserve what was dearer to them than life—an honest name."

Hastie was somewhat soothed by Philip's cheering representations, but could not be prevailed upon to accompany him to Deanhouse. "He felt," he said, "so agitated, that he could not use any persuasion with old Cauldwell to induce him to relent—he could not speak to him," and entreated Philip to undertake the matter alone. This the latter agreed to, and immediately set off to Deanhouse, the residence of his patron saint.

His patron saint, however, had been very early astir that morning.

He was aware that if a shrewd man, as Forrester appeared to be, moved about, or made his appearance amongst the villagers, he would be apt to make inquiries, and hear reports, by no means favourable to the cause which he, the lord of the manor, had so much at heart. The lord of the village was aware that he stood in no good repute with the villagers, and he did not wish the widow to be much alone with her relative until she had become more reconciled with the immaculate Cauldwells. Accordingly, the old gentleman resolved on an early walk, and farther, that that walk should terminate at his brother's house. Once there, he thought, and Forrester must be a very clever, clear-headed, long-draughted person, indeed, if he were not taken in by the cool, sagacious, double-dealing lawyer. He was anxious, also, to induce Forrester to purchase some one of the country houses over which his brother had, he knew, bonds of security; and that gentleman, although exceedingly anxious to visit his sister-in-law in her cottage, was easily persuaded to accompany Deanhouse, on learning from him that there was a probability of his getting a house at once ready for occupancy. The two friends walked up to the lawyer's house in Ramsay Garden, where they were very kindly received by this most interesting family. Mr Forrester was much struck with the contrast of character between the brothers Cauldwell; the one so stately, slow, and pompous in all his sayings and doings, the other so keen, sharp, and abrupt in all his expressions and movements. Mrs Cauldwell, too, was very kind and attentive; neither were the Misses Cauldwell less so. Their varied accomplishments were lauded in the highest terms by their delighted parent, while they, in their turn, hinted, that, but for the instructions which they had received from Martha, they might not have been such paragons of perfection. Jack Cauldwell, too, was more than ordinarily brilliant, and, as the breakfast table proved, he had anticipated this kind morning visit, and had caused his mother to make due preparations for the reception of Mr Forrester.

During breakfast, frequent allusions were, of course, made to Mr Forrester, his unexpected return, and his intentions for the future; and Lawyer Cauldwell recollected that there was a house to be sold in the neighbourhood of Roslin, over which he held a bond in security for one of his clients. "It was," he said, "one of the most complete and prettiest mansions in that beautiful locality, and he was sure it would please a person of Mr Forrester's tastes and habits. The price was moderate, and the house, which was already furnished, could be had possession of immediately. What would they think of going out at once, and looking at it? They might easily hire a conveyance, and start off together."

"Hire a conveyance!" interposed old Deanhouse. "What use for

that? Jack, here, can go down to my house, and bring up the family vehicle. Excellent, stout article—little, very little used, Mr Forrester. Have not had it out for ages—will be better of air. Your horse and mine make excellent pair. Jack will drive us—good driver, eh, Jack? Better to use our own than pay for another's. Penny saved, twopence won, eh?"

Although Jack felt much tickled at the idea of Cauldwell's old white nag running in harness with Forrester's noble-looking steed, he restrained his mirth, and set off on his way to Deanhouse, to get the old rumbling machine ready for the road. In the event of his having any difficulty in getting the turn-out in order, he was to send for Waldie, who would willingly assist him,—Deanhouse remarking, that the smith liked better to have his hand in his neighbour's work than his own, and that an out-of-the-way job of that kind pleased him amazingly.

Jack had reached the avenue, and was within a few paces of the door of Deanhouse, when who should confront him but Philip Lauder. The two young men stood and gazed steadily at each other for a few seconds without speaking. At length, the silence was broken by Jack, who inquired if Philip had been seeking his uncle. Lauder replied in the affirmative, when Jack informed him that he had just left him, and was about to return to where he was, adding, in a very friendly tone of voice, "If I can be of any service in carrying a message from you to him, I shall be happy. The unpleasant affair which once occurred between us, I am anxious to forget, and am willing now to do what I can to serve you, if you will accept my services."

"Your conduct on that occasion, Sir," said Philip, "I have long understood you sincerely repented, and, therefore, I retain no recollections of it, save those of a grateful kind, for it was the means of introducing me to Mrs Forrester and her daughter. Besides, the kind encouragement I have received from your uncle would, of itself, induce me to forget all unpleasantness between us. At the present moment, however, your uncle has, in an unaccountable manner, withdrawn his friendly aid from us, by stopping the payment of our instalment to pay his cash-account. We have two bills due to-day, and I have called to solicit a continuance of our cash-credit. I am not aware of having in any way offended your uncle."

"Ah! but you have, you have, my dear fellow," exclaimed Jack; "I see it,—I see it all, Mr Lauder. You don't know old Skinflint so well as I do. Your little ploy at Colinton yesterday has displeased him. He has thought you extravagant, has been angry because he was not invited, and has pulled you up in consequence. Pity, great pity, my dear fellow, that young lads of mettle like us should not have the wherewith to go the pace. Such old misers as Deanhouse make no allowance

for what they call the extravagance of youth. They would have us live on air like themselves, the rascally old wuzzent mummies. My worthy uncle has been afraid you and Hastie were outrunning the constable, and he has taken this step to secure himself. Ah! cunning old fox, uncle; not to be done; can't be taken in, Philip."

Philip, to whom a considerable portion of this speech was totally unintelligible, felt indignant at the implication contained in the concluding sentence, and, with considerable animation, exclaimed, "I trust, Sir, you don't mean to insinuate that I intended to defraud your uncle or any one else. Thank heaven, my habits are frugal. I have been trained to hard labour; and although I may be unable at present to meet the demands against me, I shall work for twenty hours out of the four-and-twenty, and live on the meanest fare, to pay my creditors to the last farthing I owe them."

"Whee-ee-ow!" exclaimed, or rather half whistled Jack, "you must take me to be very green, old chum, if you think I shall swallow that. You don't mean to tell me now that you have not lived better since you commenced business than when you worked as journeyman? Tuts, man, don't attempt to gull Jack Cauldwell. Human nature is human nature, and man always takes ease and comfort when he can get it."

"Indeed, Sir," answered Philip, "you accuse me wrongfully. I have laboured harder, and lived more frugally, since I was in business on my own account, than ever I did under a master."

"Why, then," said Jack, coolly, "You are a cursed fool for your pains, and wholly unworthy of either my advice or assistance in this emergency."

"I hope not," said Philip, with an appearance of calmness, which but ill accorded with his real feelings. "I hope not. May I ask, Sir, what you would advise me to do? My partner and I granted two bills, as I formerly told you, which are due this day to two friendly persons, who have reposed implicit confidence in us. We are not able to meet these demands. What would you advise?"

"Why, my dear fellow," said Jack, "under all the circumstances of the case, I should certainly recommend you to bolt—to cut and run. You are young men, and might do well abroad. Witness the return of the veteran Forrester. By and bye you might come home similarly circumstanced."

"Ay," said Philip, scarcely able longer to contain himself, "and you would have me leave home, with a broken character and a tainted name."

"My dear chum," said Jack, "it is not your fault, you know. It is in consequence of misfortunes, which uniformly attend all men of spirit, and which men of spirit are generally above. What need you care what people say of you in your absence? The circumstance of your

having left a little debt behind you, will help to keep your name in lasting remembrance."

"You cold-blooded, unprincipled scoundrel!" exclaimed Lauder, unable longer to restrain his passion, "Go away, and leave you in undisturbed possession of the fair fame of an honest man! Leave you to impose yourself on the world as a man of sterling principle, to endeavour to worm yourself into the good graces of the pure and high-souled Martha Forrester? Wretch! I pity you; I despise you. Whatever be my fate, be assured that pure and taintless as her spotless self shall be the name of him whom she has hitherto honoured with her confidence." Having said this, Philip turned on his heel, and left Jack standing in the middle of the avenue, with a countenance expressive, despite his natural effrontery, of humiliation and abasement.

Just as Philip had reached, and was about to open the door that led to the Water of Leith, who should lift the latch on the opposite side but Martha Forrester, blooming like a rose-bud, and glowing with love, beauty, and excitement. Martha had come up to Deanhouse, in search of her uncle. She and her mother had been busy during the preceding night and that morning, making arrangements for the reception of their relative. A hundred little devices had Martha planned and executed to adorn their little mansion, and render it more attractive to the returned wanderer. Long, long after Mrs Forrester had gone to bed had Martha been engaged in patching, and mending, and decorating; and during the greater portion of the night, a light in the cottage window intimated that she was still busily engaged in her labour of love. At an early hour in the morning, she and her mother might have been seen looking anxiously in the direction of Deanhouse for the appearance of Mr Forrester. Hours passed on; breakfast was prepared; still he came not. Mrs Forrester lost all patience, so did Martha; and at last the gentle girl put her little straw bonnet on her head, flung her slight scarf over her shoulders, and tripped away towards Deanhouse, to ascertain the cause of her uncle's delay. This was the first time she had ever attempted to enter the precincts of that mansion. Was it not odd, then, that the first she should meet on this occasion should have been Philip Lauder?

Philip was so much astonished by this unexpected meeting with Martha, that some seconds elapsed ere he could speak to her. Like all the unfortunate, he imagined that the whole world knew his situation as well as he did himself, and he believed that Martha had already heard all the particulars. It was this feeling that caused the red blood to rush to his brow on seeing her. In painful silence he waited to learn whether she came to condole and sympathize with him, or to seek to be freed from her engagement. Another moment, however, served to dispel his doubts; and when, in soft, subdued tones, and with

a sweet melodious voice, she exclaimed, "Dear Philip, are you here?" he felt his heart leap with ecstacy in his bosom.

"My dear Miss Forrester," he said, "I little expected to meet you here. You don't often visit Deanhouse?"

"No Philip," answered Martha. "You know that neither my mother nor I have much cause to respect or esteem the proprietor. His cruel harshness to us in bygone times can never be forgotten—I mean altogether forgotten. At present, my errand here is to seek Mr Forrester, whom we expected to breakfast, but who has not yet appeared. Have you seen him here to-day?"

"No," said Philip, "indeed I have not. He went out early this morning with his host to Lawyer Cauldwell's, and it is likely they will have stopped there to breakfast. Young Mr John Cauldwell, with whom I have just parted in the avenue, will, I daresay, be able to give you more correct information."

"Gracious heaven, I thank thee!" exclaimed Martha, "for having escaped an interview with that unworthy and unprincipled person. Ah! Philip, you would not surely advise me to exchange word or thought with him. Let us away together."

"My dear Miss Forrester," said Phillip, "fate seems determined that you and I are to journey through life in separate paths. Yours is now to be strewn with flowers—mine, alas! becomes overgrown with briars and thorns. You must forget me, Martha—dear Martha, I would say. Misfortune has at last laid her iron grasp upon me, and I am unable to free myself from her clutches. I am indeed wretched, most wretched;" and here the poor fellow hid his face in his hands, and burst into tears.

Martha was amazed, confounded, by this, to her, unaccountable outburst of grief and despair, after what had passed between them on the previous day. In eager and breathless tones the poor girl exclaimed, "What now oppresses you, dear Philip? Tell me the cause of your grief, that I may share it with you? Repose entire confidence in me, it shall not be abused. I have no thought or secret from you. Speak to me. If I cannot alleviate your sorrows, I can at least share them."

"Ah! my dearest, you have been my guardian angel!" exclaimed Philip, "yet I have fallen. I am a poor bankrupt in love and in honour. I am ruined, Martha. My reputation, my all is gone, and you are lost to me for ever."

"How, bankrupt—how ruined, Philip? Explain yourself, I beseech you," said Martha.

Thus importuned Philip briefly explained to the astonished and trembling girl the whole circumstances connected with his case, and the exact position in which he and Hastie stood.

When Martha had heard Philip's story, "Let us away to my mother."

she said; "she has been sore tried in the school of adversity, and has seen much of the world, and the world's ways. She may be able to advise you in this matter."

"My dear Martha," replied Philip, "your mother has endured many long years of suffering and sorrow, and now that the cup of joy is at her lips, I would not imbitter it, in however slight a degree, with my misfortunes. Neither must you, Martha, share the fate of one whose name the world will brand with dishonesty."

"Philip Lauder," said Martha solemnly, "it was only yesterday that I pledged you my heart and hand; and if misfortune has come upon you, it is my part to sustain and comfort you with my sympathy. Think ye so meanly of my affection, Philip—of my principles, as to imagine that I could retract the solemn pledge then given? No, Philip, that pledge is sacred. In weal or in woe—in poverty or in riches—in sickness or in health—I shall be with you; and if you cast me from you, I will go with a heart broken, but unchanged."

"And if ever I give up this dear, dear hand," exclaimed Philip, as he passionately pressed it to his burning lips, "may I give up my manhood, my individuality, my consciousness of existence. But, oh! how unworthy am I of such angelic perfection—of such transcendent brightness. Yet, dearest, be assured if the most devoted love, if deathless gratitude can in any way compensate for those qualities more highly prized by the world—wealth and station—you occupy fully and entirely the whole heart and soul, dreaming and awake, of Philip Lauder. Encouraged by your smiles, I shall endeavour to free myself from my present difficulties. I shall manfully struggle to recover my lost position. I will call on my good kind friend Mr Flemyng for his advice; and, I feel confident that if health and strength endures, none shall ever sustain a loss by Philip Lauder."

By this time the lovers had reached the cottage door, where they parted, Philip proceeding to visit his friend the miller, and Martha to reveal the story of her lover's misfortunes to her mother.

Mrs Forrester was more grieved than astonished at the intelligence. "Ah!" she said, "we cannot gather figs from thorns, nor grapes from thistles. A corrupt tree yieldeth not good fruit; neither is a generous act to be expected from the calculating selfish Cauldwell. Covetousness, like other vices, when persisted in, strengthens with years, and the young contractors have fallen victims to their anxiety to procure employment, and the heartless rapacity of the old miser. We must do our best to expose this hypocrite, otherwise he may poison the mind of our warm-hearted relative against our dear friend Lauder. Get my bonnet, dear, we shall go together to Lawyer Cauldwell's, and do our best to assist the cause of innocence and truth. In such a cause promptitude is called for, and must be exerted."

THE WIDOW'S APPEAL

Accordingly the mother and daughter were soon on their way to the house of Lawyer Cauldwell, the door of which was opened by Miss Maria—Old Maillie happening to be out of the way, and Mr Cauldwell, as on many other occasions, being without any other servant than this ancient domestic. Miss Maria, without speaking a word to the widow and daughter, rushed into the room, and with an affected childishness of manner, exclaimed, "O, ma'! O, pa'! O, uncle! here comes Mrs Forrester and our dear Martha. Come and welcome them," and out the whole bundle sallied to shake the visitors by the hand, and to greet them with a cordial welcome. Lawyer Cauldwell alone shrank from the mild but penetrating glance of Mrs Forrester's eye, as if it awakened some unpleasant associations. But old Cauldwell of Deanhouse received them with the most extravagant demonstrations of joy. "Happy, happy meeting!" he exclaimed. "Couldn't keep from uncle, eh, Martha? Kind, very kind. Will make too much of him, widow—spoil him, eh? Happy old fellow—all happy, eh?" and here the old man chuckled, and snapped his fingers, and leaped about, as if he really felt all the happiness he affected to feel."

Mr Forrester looked somewhat grave as he grasped the hand of the widow and her daughter, and said, "I trust that my absence this morning has not been the cause of your coming abroad so early. I should have been with you before this time, notwithstanding my friend's kind hospitality, but he induced me to come hither to his brother, who has a mansion to dispose of, which he thinks would suit us for a residence. Luckily he has one for sale, which we are going to look at. From his description, I think it will suit admirably; and I sincerely hope, my dear sister, that we shall then enjoy unmingled happiness."

"If happiness consisted in being ourselves comfortably circumstanced, that blessing, thank heaven, and your bounty, we now enjoy. But there are other things necessary to secure happiness to a well-governed mind; we must be assured that what we enjoy is not procured at the cost of misery to another."

"Good! very good!" said old Cauldwell, who began to fear that some disclosure was about to be made of his meanness. "Good, exceedingly good," he repeated, "my own sentiments exactly. Just talking so as you came in. Happy to know that your thoughts run in the same current with mine."

"Now, God forbid!" exclaimed the widow, addressing her relative, and pointing to Cauldwell. "This gentleman has been the means of involving in ruinous bankruptcy, our dear, young friend, Philip Lauder, whom you met yesterday. Heavy debts have been contracted by him and his partner for materials for that large building you saw in progress. It appears that Mr Cauldwell is afraid that they have taken

the work too low, that they will not be able to finish the building at his own price; and, for the purpose of securing himself, he has withdrawn their cash-account, and stopped their instalment, leaving the young men in the midst of their undertaking, ruined in their characters, and bankrupt in their circumstances."

"Indeed!" interposed Mr Forrester, "my dear sister, I rather think you have been too hasty in your conclusions; and are blinded by your friendship for Lauder to the real state of matters. Is it not more charitable in Mr Cauldwell to stop these young men at the present stage of their contract, than to allow them to go on if the work is not paying? In the former case, their debts will be small; in the latter they would be increased tenfold. I think, now, for my part, that Mr Cauldwell has been kind and considerate in the course he has adopted, and that, in the long run, you will take the same view of his conduct as I do. In the meantime, perhaps, you and Martha, will take an airing with us and look at this residence; we expect Mr John Cauldwell every instant with the conveyance."

"Ay, ay," said old Cauldwell, "vehicle large, and spacious. Room for all. Nieces—Martha, old acquaintances, sit close together, talk over old doings—she and them, you and I. Jack will drive—capital driver."

"Oh! that will be so delightful! Won't it Martha?" said Miss Maria.

"Such a charming day for the country," simpered Miss Jane.

"Couldn't have been better, if made for us, eh?" said Deanhouse.

"Delicious," exclaimed Mrs Cauldwell. "Come Misses, and assist me in getting some tasty little tid bits ready to take with us;" and away waddled the little fat woman, followed by her two daughters, to look after, what was, in her estimation, the best part of the ploy.

The widow, however, had come here to plead the cause of Philip Lauder, and she was not to be diverted from her purpose by any such movement. She patiently waited until they had all spoken, and then, looking her relative full in the face, while her hands were clasped together on her breast, she said, "To you, Sir, I appeal, in this matter. You can, and will, I am sure, befriend poor Philip Lauder. If you knew his worth as well as I do, you would, if it were necessary, forego many enjoyments, deny yourself many luxuries, to help so dear a friend out of difficulty. Philip is upright and honourable in all his doings, and, I doubt not, will find friends elsewhere to assist and counsel him in this his dark hour of adversity; and elsewhere I must go immediately to solicit that assistance, unless I get it here. Time only is required to make enquiries into the various details of this unfortunate business. If that be not granted, the young man will immediately be declared bankrupt, and such a proclamation will break his honest heart."

"You may save yourself any farther uneasiness on that point," said John Cauldwell, who now entered the room, and who, unperceived, had been standing for some little time in the lobby outside the room door. "By the special desire of my uncle, who does much good by stealth, I have just called on Messrs Chance, Snacks and Co., to request them to allow the bills due by Lauder and Hastie to lie over for a day or two, until the quantity of work executed at Crooknook be measured, when it will be ascertained whether or not the instalments have been properly apportioned. It is quite possible that, owing to some mistake on the part of the architect, there may be something wrong here, and the contractors may have a considerable sum of money yet to come, much more than what will pay their debts;" and here the loving nephew tipped his affectionate uncle a wink full of significant meaning.

"You have done a kind and considerate deed, young man," said Mr Forrester, "and it cannot fail to produce a strong impression in your favour amongst the friends of Messrs Lauder and Hastie. My dear sister and niece, I hope, you see that there is no necessity for your giving yourselves any further uneasiness about your friend. So, be cheerful, and join us for the day. I suppose you will have the conveyance ready, Mr John?"

"All ready, Sir," said Jack, "waiting your command. The gallant steeds are bounding and panting for the road. I am proud that my interference in Lauder's matter has won your approbation. The young men, I sincerely trust, will get on better by and bye. It's a lang road that has no turning, as our old Maillie sings;" and, as if answering to her name, Maillie, who had just come in, as she hobbled along the passage, was heard chaunting to herself the following rhyme.

"Gang on, man, gang on, man, why should you lose hope,
The road is weel trodden, then why wad ye stop?
See, see, on the hill top a beacon is burning—
It's a lang weary lane that has nae a turning."

"I'd fain reach the top, I wad fain climb the brae;
But scowling misfortune stands fair in my way:
I canna weel thole siccan frowning an' spurning—
It's a lang weary road, an' has nae a turning."

"Toot, lassocks, ye ken, are while's gey hard to win,
They frown, an' say no, when they're only in fun:
The best stubble butter takes langest o' churning—
It's a lang dowie road that has nae a turning.

" I canna walk weel, for the road's strewn wi' briers,
I canna see weel, for my ee's dim wi' tears :
I canna stand out, I am weary sojourning—
It's a lang dreary road, and has nae a turning."

" Be brave, persevere, though your hopes may be sma',
Be brave an' you'll win fortune's favours an' a' :
Fair day dawns mair bright, after dark nights o' mourning—
It's a lang weary road that has nae a turning."

On, on, wends the pilgrim, with hope-kindled breast,
Nor stays he till high on the mountain's proud crest :
He ferlies what kept him sae lang sitting girnin'—
It's a lang weary road that has nae a turning.

The whole party listened intently to the old woman. Forrester was deeply affected. It seemed to him as if some ancient instrument which, for many long years had been silent, had suddenly broken forth and was pouring out its sorrow in an ancient melody. " What do I hear !" he exclaimed, " what do I feel. This is indeed the land of dreams ! This is indeed a voice from the dead !"

A voice from the dead must have warbled that strain
Which raises old times thus in vision again ;
And friends who were waiting the dread trumpet's blast,
Have left their cold graves at this voice from the past.

The melody swells, 'tis the voice of gone years,
Now kindling to rapture, now melting to tears ;
And age's drear sky with dark sorrows o'ercast,
Is lit by youth's sun, by this voice from the past.

Gay visions surround me—I feel me a boy,
My mother's pale face, flushes crimson with joy ;
I kiss her—I press her—sweet vision, oh last !
Or waft me to heaven on this voice from the past.

The melody fades, hark ! it mounts far on high,
'Twas a sweet seraph singing a lay of the sky,
To lead up the soul when the frame's sinking fast—
'Twas thine, O my mother ! this lay of the past.

CHAPTER XIV.

Auld chimes, an' auld rhymes,
Gaur us greet ower auld times.
Old Proverb.

SCARCELY had Forrester uttered the last words of the poem which concludes the preceding chapter, when Maillie, apparently attracted by the measured cadence of his voice, threw open the door of the apartment, and advanced towards him. Regardless of all others present, she fixed her gaze steadily on his weather-beaten countenance, and scanned him from head to foot with a keen and penetrating eye. The appearance of the old woman made a deep impression on Forrester. A host of associations rushed upon his memory—his bosom was agitated by a wild tide of tumultuous thoughts, and he held out both his hands, as if about to welcome an old friend. A tear started to Maillie's eye—her firmness forsook her—and, tottering forward, she fell into his arms, exclaiming, "My son! My son!"

This touching exclamation completely overpowered Forrester. He recollected perfectly the aged figure, which now lay motionless in his arms, to have been the intimate friend of his foster-mother, in days long gone. Her appearance so unexpectedly, at such a moment, made him feel as if she had arisen from her grave to welcome him to the land of his fathers; and he regarded her with mingled feelings of gratitude and veneration. A vision of the past rose before him—he pressed the poor old woman to his breast, and exclaimed, "Thy son! Yes, indeed, I shall be thy son, my more than mother! This is surely the land of life in death! To be thus welcomed by one whom I had long imagined in the grave, is indeed a happiness—a happiness, strange and indescribable. Ah! well I remember those heavenly lessons of charity, peace, and goodwill to all, you taught me in my early boyhood. Surely, surely, we are not the mere sport of a blind chance, the wayward creatures of a day, but the children of destiny, the heirs of immortality." And here he pressed the old woman's hand with warm affection.

Maillie, who had gradually recovered from the unconscious state into which the excitement occasioned by this unexpected meeting had thrown her, now raised herself up, and was about to shrink aside, as if aware of having been guilty of some indiscretion. Again, however, she raised her eyes to Forrester, and her face was rapidly overspread with a hectic flush. To an onlooker, her countenance would seem to have been suddenly divested of the wrinkles of fourscore years, and to be again arrayed in the radiant bloom of youth. Again she clasped her hands together, while in accents of conscious pride, of intense earnestness, and with a dignity of manner which overawed all present, she exclaimed—

"Yes, you are indeed my son! My brave, true-hearted boy! This is no idle vision, no cruel mockery. Oft have I dreamt of this meeting, during the weary, weary nights of many long years. But now," she continued, "this is reality—now has the son of my youth returned to me. My nights of mourning have passed away, and a morning of joy hath dawned to light me to my grave in peace and quietness;" and again she sunk back in Forrester's arms totally exhausted.

As the poor old frail woman lay without any signs of animation, the bystanders looked on with a feeling of awe, and even the callous Jack Cauldwell appeared, for the moment, somewhat affected. Martha—the good, kind, angelic Martha—assisted Mr Forrester in leading the aged woman to a sofa, and set about using means for her recovery. She rushed past the paralyzed group of onlookers, and in an instant returned with a large basin of water, with which she and her mother bathed the hands and temples of poor old Maillie.

At length a deep and long-drawn sigh told of returning consciousness; and Forrester, who hung over the sufferer with tender anxiety, saw with joy her eyes again open and rest upon him, with an expression of intense affection. What a tumult of strange thoughts and feelings now rushed through his bosom. Why should she evince such emotion, and utter such exclamations? Was she, indeed, his real and true parent, and not merely the friend of his foster-mother? If so, why had she kept the secret from him in his boyish years? Perhaps, however, there was not any such connexion, and her agitation, and the expressions by which it was accompanied, might have been caused by the unexpected return of the foster-child of an old and valued friend. In this way, perhaps, her wandering fancy had pictured him as her own; and the more Forrester considered the matter, the more he was confirmed in this opinion. He recollected that, according to his foster-mother's statement, Maillie had been a servant in Deanhouse from her childhood. He was struck with this recollection, which naturally placed in a strong light the extraordinary kindness of Lawyer Cauldwell, who seemed to retain, in a confidential situation, one who had little to re-

commend her but a remembrance of her ancient service in the family. Overcome by these reflections, Forrester, addressing the latter gentleman, exclaimed, "Good, kind, faithful creature! She loves me for the sake of my foster-mother. They were attached friends, Mr Cauldwell; and I feel as grateful, my dear Sir, to you, for having given this old friend a home, as if she had been my own mother."

Maillie, whose ear caught the latter part of this sentence, raised herself on the sofa, with the assistance of Martha, and in low, but earnest accents, exclaimed, "Lawyer Cauldwell has indeed sheltered your poor mother. The family tree of Cauldwell has expanded over her head—its trunk has supported her when weary and exhausted—its covering hath sheltered her from the storm, and beneath its shade shall her eyes be closed—her grave shall be overshadowed by its waving branches. The Cauldwell family well merit every mark of esteem and gratitude from you, my son. They have sheltered and befriended me, when, but for them, I might have been an outcast. But hear me—I earnestly intreat you—I am indeed and in truth your mother."

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed Forrester, "can this be true? Are you indeed my mother? Then, Oh tell me quickly, quickly, I beseech you, who was my father?"

"Ask me no more, my son!" said Maillie. "You may learn that hereafter. At present, I cannot, will not, dare not, answer such question;" and here, overcome and exhausted, she once more resigned herself into the arms of Martha, who laid her gently back on the couch, and continued to watch over her with intense anxiety and tender watchfulness.

The extraordinary disclosure just made by Maillie produced, as might have been expected, great excitement amongst the members of the Cauldwell family, who, however, exhibited great reluctance to believe that a poor, friendless old woman, who had served in their family in a menial capacity for so long a period of time, and whom they had been accustomed to treat as a being of an inferior order to that to which they themselves belonged, should be the mother of a gentleman of such graceful manners and great wealth as Mr Forrester. It was not possible—they could not, they would not believe it. Martha and her mother did believe it most devoutly; and Mr Forrester himself hung over the couch on which Maillie lay, evincing the most anxious and tender solicitude for her recovery. When, at length, she did rise from the sofa, and was moving towards her little room, the leading members of the Cauldwell family, following the instincts of their nature, and unable to resist certain secret convictions of the truth of Maillie's statement, as to her being the mother of Mr Forrester, rushed to her assistance, and began conducting themselves towards her with a fawning servility, which was equalled only by their former domineering violence.

"O la, ma!" exclaimed Miss Jane, "could you ever have imagined such a thing of Mrs Mathison?"

"Ay, and we never to hear of it!" said Miss Maria.

"Never! my dears," exclaimed Mrs Cauldwell. "Yet," she continued, "I often imagined that some mystery hung over Maillie, when, in the mornings, I have got her sitting by the kitchen-fire in the same position in which I had left her on the previous night, while her bed had no appearance of having been occupied. Poor body! she must have endured much internal grief, but now her day of joy hath come. We shall make you so happy, Maillie! Excuse me, but I fear I shall never be able to call you by any other name."

"Neither must you," answered Maillie; "you have never known me by any other, and we have spent a long lifetime together. But we must now soon part—the end of my journey is near."

"Nay, nay, dear Maillie," shouted Miss Maria, "you must live for our sakes, for a long long time yet."

"Dear, dear, good lady!" exclaimed Miss Jane, "how I do love her!"

"Ah, fellow feeling!" said old Cauldwell. "Tender nerves!—too much for me!" and he applied his handkerchief to his eyes, affecting to wipe away a tear. "Too much for me! What an old fool they make me!"

"Callous must that heart be that could contemplate unmoved such a scene as this!" exclaimed Lawyer Cauldwell, in a solemn tone of voice.

"It is, indeed, a strange, and to me a most interesting event," said Mr Forrester, "to have met with a parent, in the person of one whom formerly I looked on merely as a guide and teacher; and to have met her, after so long a separation, under the roof-tree of this kind and amiable family. My heart is too full for utterance! Dear mother! you must help me to express my gratitude to your kind and generous supporters; and, Oh! may I hope that our relation to them will be closer and closer;" and here the eyes of both he and his mother involuntarily turned to Martha and Jack Cauldwell.

That gentleman evidently began to grow weary of this sentimental exhibition, and suggested that, as the day was fine, and the carriage ready, they should be off to Thorniedell, leaving Maillie in charge of his mother and sisters.

"Nay, nay!" exclaimed Maillie, "take not my son away from me. You will not again leave me, William, dear,—where you go I will go. I could not now survive a day without you;" and as the old woman thus expressed herself, all present were struck with a certain remarkable change in her whole deportment. Her language suddenly became

more dignified, and her general demeanour and bearing seemed to indicate that she had assumed a new, and, as it seemed, her real character.

Forrester felt pleased, nay, proud of his new-found parent, and suggested that, as she now seemed much recovered, perhaps she would accompany them to see the house, which their kind friends thought likely to suit them for their future residence. This proposal was at once acceded to; and Jack Cauldwell considerately proposed that, as they might be straitened for room, he would follow them on his friend Snacks' hunter.

It was a beautiful day in May. The air was hazy, and the opening buds and glossy green leaves seemed brightened and refreshed with the balmy moisture with which the atmosphere was laden. The mist shrouded in its deep and massive folds the summits of the Pentlands, while, lower down, the sun lighted up little patches of green fields and brown muir, or glistened, with dazzling brilliancy, on the whitened cottages of the hoary hillside village, surrounded by venerable trees, and imbedded in the green hollow, in the breast of which sparkled a tiny mountain streamlet. Every knoll, and bush, and tree, seemed bursting into song, as numberless feathered minstrels warbled, in a thousand melodies, a welcome to the infant summer. The ploughman whistled cheerily to his sturdy steeds, as they together tore up the old black mould, which, perchance, had not been disturbed since the deluge; and every thing in nature seemed to be animated with new life and vigour.

The rumbling old lumbersome carriage containing the party, and Snacks' steed carrying Jack Cauldwell, passed on through the sweet little village of Morningside, the sylvan hamlet of Braid, and the solitary Pentland, with its secluded grave-yard. On, and on, they still drove—now over lofty heights, commanding on all sides extensive and picturesque views—then would they descend into hollows, where the road was entirely overarched by tall and umbrageous trees. At length they reached the ancient village of Roslin, and passed onward until the river Esk's thickly wooded banks lay before them. In the centre of this picturesque scene rose the weatherbeaten walls of the ancient Castle of Roslin, with its narrow and lofty bridgeway, its massy ruins, its low-arched vaults, and its small loop-holes. The Chapel also was seen, with its graceful proportions, its rich carvings, and exquisite tracery, —both of these ruins forming touching memorials of the princely magnificence of our ancient Scottish nobles. On the party passed by the romantic pathway which here skirted the Esk, and they listened delighted

> "While the din o' streams fast fa'ing,
> Struck the ear wi' thundering thud."

Every heart was in harmony, every countenance shone radiant with joy. On they went, passing numbers of villas, with little bright green garden plots in front, until they reached the cottage of Thorniedell, situated on a rising knoll, and sheltered by some fine tall trees, by which it was all but entirely surrounded. Mr Forrester was delighted with this tidy little mansion. Mrs Forrester declared it to be a perfect Eden; and Martha thought of it and Philip Lauder. The gardener's wife, who kept the house, showed them through the various apartments, with much bustling activity. She turned down the coverlets of the beds to the ladies—descanted largely on the trouble she took to keep the bedding well aired—wished that a tenant or purchaser would come forward—and said "that it was a thousand pities sic a paradise should remain a day empty." Mr Forrester, after consulting with his female friends, accepted of Lawyer Cauldwell's kind invitation, and resolved on taking immediate possession. Accordingly, giving instructions to the honest woman who had charge of the house, to have it all in good order against their return, the Cauldwell's proposed that the whole party should proceed to the village of Lasswade, and there dine together. Maillie, however, who was much fatigued, begged leave to remain; and Martha requested leave to stay and keep her company.

When Maillie and Martha were left alone, the former sunk for some time into a state of profound apathy, and silent abstraction: she sat gazing into the fire, her head leaning on her hand, and her arm resting on her knee. Anon, a long-drawn half-smothered sigh escaped, as if struggling hard for utterance, and at length she turned her gaze full on the lovely countenance of Martha, who flitted like a ministering angel around her, kindly inquiring into her wants, and administering, in so far as she could, to her comfort. Maillie gazed for some time earnestly on the kind and good girl, uttered some inarticulate words, and burst into tears.

"Dear Maillie," said Martha, much alarmed, "I hope you are not ill. I am afraid that the excitement produced by the singular occurrence of this day has fatigued you. Do, like a good dear, lie down on this sweet little couch. I shall sit and watch you while you sleep."

"Ah, my dear child!" exclaimed Maillie, "such occurences as have happened this day are overpowering. Nature will assert her rights, and this must be my excuse for the disclosure, which my lips unguardedly made to-day. Perhaps I acted imprudently; but, in such a case, I trust I may be excused, and although I may regret it, the truth must have been revealed to him at some time or other, and, perhaps, as well now as hereafter."

"And, ah Maillie!" said Martha, "your son seems to be in his ap-

pearance, manner, and bearing a perfect gentleman. Surely, surely, he is of noble descent—you should divulge to him the name of his father."

"Say no more!" exclaimed Maillie, "say no more on this subject, I beseech you. He shall know one day—but not now, not now. Ah, Martha Forrester! what disguises have I assumed during the last forty years. The degradation to which I have voluntary submitted, is of such a nature, that I can never expect more to enter that circle to which my son can now claim a right of admission. Ah, Martha! there was a time when I was, like yourself, young and fair. Pure child of nature as you are, you are not more pure than she was, who now speaks to you. Thank God, I still retain my original purity of purpose, my original kindly disposition; but I have been subjected to many heavy and severe afflictions in the course of a long and weary life. Yet, I have been enabled to keep my grief to myself, and, with Heaven's assistance, have borne up against them. Then why should I repine? No; I shall continue in the lowly sphere of life with which I have so long been familiar, and keep up, in however humble a way, my connection with the family of him in whom all my hopes and joys, my faith and love were centered."

"Alas! alas!" said Martha, "your suffering, I am convinced, must have been severe. Yet you must not be as one who will not be comforted. Your son, I have no doubt, will be proud to raise you to a station which you are well qualified to adorn. Rank and fashion are but terms of a day—they change and pass away like the leaves—truth is eternal—and worth, sterling worth, endures for ever."

"Ay, in Heaven!" exclaimed Maillie. "On earth, my child, those plants which promise to bear most fruit, frequently wither and die early. Listen to me, and you shall hear a tale never before revealed to mortal ear. I exact no promise of secrecy from you. I know that you are to be trusted, and I now confide to you my history, convinced that it will be safe in your keeping. A time may come when you may see it essential to the ends of justice, that the history of poor Maillie should be made public, and in that case, you have permission to do so." Accordingly, after rising from her seat, opening the door of the apartment to see that no one listened outside, and turning the key in the lock, to prevent any intrusion, Maillie resumed her place by the fire, and beckoning Martha to an opposite chair, rehearsed to her the leading incidents of her eventful life.

CHAPTER XV.

Life shows mony checquered beams—
Time's dark tide swells mony streams.
Proverb.

"My father," Maillie began, "was employed as under gardener at Deanhouse, and my parents inhabited a cottage in the Water of Leith, belonging to my father's employer, Mr Richard Cauldwell, the father of the present proprietor of Dean. Indeed, almost every house in the village, with scarcely a single exception, at that time, belonged to 'the Laird of Dean,' those small 'lairds' who now occupy their own cottages, having built or purchased them since that period.

"Mr Cauldwell and his lady were remarkable for their devoted attachment to each other, for their unbounded benevolence to the poor, and for their kindness and urbanity to their dependants. Their chief happiness appeared to consist in seeing those around them happy and contented; and in administering to the comforts of the aged and indigent.

"It was reported, however, by those who knew the parties, that Mr Cauldwell was a man who was chiefly remarkable for an easy disposition, and that the benevolent deeds which had so endeared him to his dependants, were in no small degree attributable to his lady, who made daily visits to the houses of the poorer cottagers, and under whose charitable auspices, want was altogether banished from the neighbourhood.

"My father was a particular favourite with his employer, and my mother was no less so with his lady; and when, in the course of one winter, both of my parents died, leaving me, their only child, an orphan, the good kind lady took me under her protection. Your grandmother and I were neighbour's children, and we were born within a few days of each other. We were much attached to one another, had attended the same school; and after the death of my parents, my benevolent patroness sent me to board with your grandmother's parents, and in a short time, I became as if I were one of the family. The neighbouring children were wont to call your grandmother and me sisters, and we were as closely and intimately attached to each other as it was possible for sisters to be. We went daily to the school together. We slept, walked, and played together. All the secrets of our young hearts were interchanged, all our hopes and our fears, our joys and our sorrows were mutual.

"Your grandmother was taller and stronger than me in person, and her mind was more masculine and vigorous than mine. She learned her lessons readily, and acquired with ease what it cost me much trouble to attain. Her memory, however, was not so retentive as mine, and consequently my stock of knowledge was more abiding and useful. My foster-sister, moreover, seemed to rely too much on her original powers, and was not possessed of patience sufficient to enable her to excell in the finer branches of female work, so that in fine sewing and embroidery, I soon left her at a hopeless distance behind.

"The Lady of Dean, who had paid marked attention to our career, and who had indeed personally instructed us in several branches of our education, often urged us on by her approval, and still more frequently expressed a warm interest in my welfare. 'My poor orphan!' would she exclaim, as she smoothed down my long tresses. 'My poor child! God protect and guard you, and all such orphans!' and she would turn aside to conceal the tear that started to her eye.

"When my foster-sister and I had attained our seventeenth year, she was taken home to Deanhouse as table-maid, and I as message girl to my lady; who, however, employed me chiefly in working embroidery. She always called me, also, to attend her on her visits of charity to the cottages of the aged, the sick, and the indigent. I eventually became lady's-maid at the Dean, and your grandmother housemaid, in which situation she remained, until she was married to your grandfather, the village carpenter of that day, who then occupied the workshop now possessed by your favourite Philip Lauder, and the cottage wherein you first saw the light, Martha, that very cottage in which you and your mother at present reside.

"Your grandmother was scarcely nineteen years of age when she was married, and I officiated as bridesmaid, much to the disappointment of a number of the village gossips, who, in consequence of having seen the bridegroom and me frequently walking together when my foster-sister was confined, and never having seen me in the society of any other, believed and maintained that I ought to have been bride. Alas! my hand and heart was reserved for one of higher rank and station, and certainly not less worthy than the honest village carpenter.

"The Laird and Lady of Dean had an only son, a few weeks older than me, who had been sent to Cambridge University a short time before my foster-sister and I went to reside in Deanhouse. He had been from home for some years, and it was not intended that he should return until his academical education was completed. But his mother, for whom he had always borne the most tender affection, falling ill, he hurried home to see her.

"At this time I was her only companion; and her son, who remem

bered me as his mother's favourite protegé, and who was wont himself, while a boy, to call me 'the village rose,' expressed himself delighted and astonished at the improvement which a few years had effected in my appearance.

"In like manner was I affected by the alteration observable on my young master. I well remembered him previously to his leaving home, and at that period he had been a stirring and mischievous boy. Many a time had the old butler of Deanhouse been sent after him, and as frequently had the old man's experienced eye been puzzled to discover his young master among the crowd of urchins, covered over as they were with flour from the mills. Many a village bicker had he been leader in; and I recollected on one occasion when he passed our cottage door, at the head of his corps of juvenile heroes, that my foster-mother exclaimed, 'That daft callant will mak a merry laird.' No wonder, therefore, than I was astonished to find the joyous and adventurous boy transformed in the course of a few years into a modest and retiring student, a highly educated and accomplished young gentleman.

"Mr Oliver Cauldwell was of a modest and retiring nature; and although his feelings were warm, and his disposition somewhat impetous, his manners were gentle to a degree approaching timidity. He was thus considered reserved and formal by those who did not know him intimately, and who, perhaps, being beneath him in station, attributed his backwardness to pride. Never was there a more erroneous opinion formed—never did kinder heart beat in a bosom than that of Oliver Cauldwell. Day after day, night after night, did he linger by the couch of his sainted and suffering mother, administering to her wants, and anticipating her wishes. At last, when, after his sojourning with us for some weeks, his beloved parent partially recovered from her illness, what happiness was expressed in his flushed and excited countenance—what delight became visible in all his movements. Then it was, that I caught his eyes frequently rivetted on me; and then, for the first time, I became conscious of sentiments which I yet dared not think of. How was it possible to witness such pure and holy affection with indifference—to see such devoted love manifested for a parent, without admiring the child.

"After his mother's health had been in some degree restored, Mr Oliver prepared to set off for Cambridge. The evening previous to his departure, I found a note from him lying in my little apartment, requesting me to meet him at dark in the pathway that led by the waterside to the village, that he might consult with me more freely than he had done, and leave more detailed instructions regarding his beloved mother. I had no hesitation, no doubt—I knew I had nothing to fear from one who was the very soul of honour. I hastened

to meet him—I tripped down the little pathway that led to the water's edge, and, just as I emerged from the lofty trees which overshadowed that pathway, the moon rose, and its brilliant reflection from the bosom of the stream, for the moment dazzled my eyes, and blinded them to every thing else. Another moment, and my young master had advanced, and respectfully offered me his arm. We walked on in silence for some time — suddenly he paused—he hesitated — I trembled. Again we strayed onward without speaking. At length, we came to a bend of the road, the moonlit stream sparkling in brilliancy burst upon us, and we both involuntarily paused to gaze on the beauty of the scene. Again were we about to move on, when Oliver suddenly seized my hand, and pressed it to his lips. 'Emily!' he exclaimed, 'I believe that you have been sent by heaven to watch over my beloved mother, and I leave her in your hands, convinced that you are both in the keeping of the Almighty God. The warmest prayers of a grateful heart, of a devoted son, shall ascend to heaven for your welfare. I shall think of you by day, and dream of you by night. God Almighty bless you, my dear, kind Emily! I know not how to evince my gratitude for your patient, your all-enduring kindness.'

"You may easily conceive, Martha, that during this sudden and unexpected outburst of feeling I was altogether insensible. Every word fell upon my ear like music, and entered into the very depths of my soul. I was for the moment in a state of transport, and felt as if Oliver and I were equal. In another moment, the truth began to flash upon my mind, and I wished that he were the humble youth, and I the heiress to the Dean. These thoughts passed rapidly away; and, with some trepidation, I told Mr Oliver that his mother had been more than a parent to me—that it was my bounden duty to wait on her by night and by day—that I was exceedingly anxious to make her all the return I could, convinced as I was, that my best exertions were all too little for the bounteous gifts she had conferred on me.

"'You merit these gifts, and ten thousand times more, dear Emily!' exclaimed the youth, 'and were it not at this particular moment, and owing to the particular circumstances in which we are at present placed, I should be tempted to make a declaration, in unison with the feelings with which you have inspired me. Meantime, O may I live in hope that, on some future day, we shall meet under happier auspices, although I fear me never again under the benign influence of my sainted mother's personal presence. I must now bid her farewell. I feel a strange presentiment that I shall not see her in life again. You must write me often, very often, dear Emily—sister I would say. Rehearse to me in your letters as much as you can of my mother's conversation; it will cheer me when far from her couch. God for ever

bless you!' Again he lifted my hand to his lips, and pressed thereon a burning kiss; and having reached the avenue in front of the house, we parted, I to join my mistress, and he to take his farewell of the old wood and the silent stream.

"It was some days after Oliver's departure ere I recovered my equilibrium of mind. I felt melancholy and dejected, and could do little in the way of comforting my beloved mistress. Her conversation, also, was wholly about her son, and tended to open the wounds afresh when they were nearly closed. 'Poor fellow!' she would exclaim. 'My dear, dear son! I long to hear from him. No wonder, Emily, the gloom around us has deepened since he left us: he is the light of the earth to me, the joy and pride of his mother's heart; yet don't mourn his absence, Emily, although, poor girl, you must feel very dull, he was so cheerful, so kind. God bless him! he is worthy of universal love.'

"Autumn, with all her brilliant hues and resplendent skies, had given way before the first advance of dreary winter. The golden fruits of the earth had been gathered together, and beneath their double covering of thatch, those precious treasures were rendered impervious to the threatened assaults of grim and grizzly winter. Now and then might be seen small flakes of snow, the advanced guards of the approaching storm, which, lowering in the boisterous north, could scarcely be restrained from coming forth before its appropriate season. The days shortened, and the nights lengthened; and, as the daylight dwindled imperceptibly away and away, until morning and evening met together, so did the good sainted Lady of the Dean fade, and wane, and waste away.

"Ah! well do I recollect the day of her death: it was a beautiful Sabbath morning—the ground was covered with hoarfrost—the trees and bushes were fringed with artificial boughs and festoons of frozen dew—the stream stood still and motionless—the smoke arose from the chimneys of the distant village in straight columns. Not a breath of wind disturbed the perfect repose of earth and air—not a sound was heard, save, mayhap, the cawing of an ancient crow overhead, or the chirrup of the little robin that hopped on the window-sill of the sick lady's apartment. The sunbeams, which were almost horizontal, made their way through the curtain, which I had closed, by way of keeping the light from oppressing the eyes of my benefactress—when, in a faint, low voice, she desired me to draw aside the curtain, and let her enjoy the beams of the blessed sun. I raised her up on her pillow, the light fell full upon her countenance, and she seemed a saint about to pass into glory. She desired me to read her a favourite chapter of the Bible—she said she felt herself composed and happy. Her husband, who had not for some time past evinced that interest in her recovery

which might have been expected, entered the apartment, and tenderly inquired how she felt. 'Happy! happy!' she exclaimed. 'My dear, weep not for me—I go to another and a better world, from which, if permitted, I shall watch over you and yours, until we meet again. Remember me to my dear son—be kind to the poor orphan—farewell, farewell!' She prayed—the pulse of life stood still—the strong man burst into tears, and threw himself down on the floor in an agony of grief.

THE LADY OF DEAN.

THERE's sadness and sorrow, there's wailing and woe,
Lone breasts are heaving, and silent tears flow;
Autumn hath gone, and cold winter blows keen—
Faded and dead is the Lady of Dean.

Oh! woe for the aged, and woe for the poor,
That angel brings joy to their dwellings no more;
The orphan's bright tear-drops that glistened like sheen,
Were made pearls of joy by the Lady of Dean.

Her voice was attuned the sad mourner to cheer,
Her step fell like music on age's dull ear;
So humble her spirit, so gentle her mien,
The poorest claimed kin with the Lady of Dean.

When living all deemed her an angel of light,—
Now dead, all believe her a star shining bright;
If Mercy's sweet angel on earth e'er was seen,
She lived, and she died, in the Lady of Dean.

Pale Death shrinks aghast from the deed he hath done;
All twined with sad yew is the wreath he hath won;
The meek winter flower gems the turf growing green,
That covers the dear sainted Lady of Dean.

"Deeply was the loss of my beloved lady felt by all, and her husband appeared for some time inconsolable. After the expiry of several months, however, that gentleman, much to the astonishment of every body, again entered into the marriage state, and the present Messrs Archibald and John Cauldwell were the fruits of that union.

"With Mr Oliver I had been in the habit of corresponding until his mother's death; and as he had been prevented from getting home

to assist in the funeral obsequies, I wrote him a detailed account of all that took place on that melancholy occasion. Again and again he communicated with me; and when his father wrote to him announcing his intended marriage, and requesting his presence at the nuptial ceremony, he evaded the invitation by some trivial excuse; while, in a letter he wrote me, he laid open the whole state of his heart, declaring that he could not have endured the trial of seeing his mother's place filled by another, and that he had absented himself from his father's house on that occasion, because he felt that he could not have shown even common courtesy to the successor of his sainted mother.

"Shortly after this I received another letter from Oliver, and I was exceedingly perplexed and astonished to find that it contained a declaration of devoted attachment to me, and a solicitation of love in return. The letter also enclosed several verses, which I shall recite to you—they, you may be sure, are rivetted in my memory for ever.

SCOTLAND AND THEE.

A stranger I wander 'mid England's fair flowers,
Her famed seats of learning, and old classic towers;
But fairer, and sweeter, and dearer to me,
Were one little blink of Auld Scotland an' Thee.

Here are green sloping valleys, and cool shady lanes,
Here are high waving forests, and flower covered plains;
But the heart longs to roam o'er the bleak moorland lee,
To climb the steep mountains o' Scotland wi' Thee.

Here are castles and palaces, hallowed by time,
Here are grey gothic structures, tall, towering, sublime;
But Scotland's bold hills, everlasting and free,
Remain as unchanged as my love unto Thee.

Here are sweet little hamlets, embowered in green glades,
Here are gay joyous peasants, and light laughing maids;
Here are happy old souls, full of humour and glee,
But they want the warm hearts of Auld Scotland an' Thee.

The bonny blue bonnet, the cozy grey plaid,
The strong swarthy ploughmen, an' rosy milk maid;
The wild heather bloom, an' the sweet mountain pea,
All rise when I think upon Scotland an' Thee.

Thy form fills my fancy, a vision of light,
I dream of thy beauties through all the long night;
Ere the leaf is unfaulded that buds in the tree,
I'll come, my dear charmer, to Scotland and Thee.

"This communication was altogether of such a nature that I dared not allow the correspondence to be longer continued. I sent my professed admirer an answer to that effect, and counselled him to look for one who moved in his own sphere of life. For myself, I said, I should continue to pray for his welfare; and, notwithstanding the difference between our stations in life, I should, in accordance with the expressed wish of his departed mother, always continue to look on him as a brother. He sent me other letters and other poems of a similar description with that which I have just recited to you, Martha. All of these epistles I returned to him, and in this way our correspondence at length dropped altogether.

"One beautiful autumn evening, I had set out on a solitary stroll towards the wooded cliffs of Corstorphin Hill. The setting sun shed a broad blaze of light over the western horizon—dark ranges of clouds were rolled together, their fringed edges deeply dyed with the golden rays of the glorious luminary—the boughs and branches of the trees were sparkling with golden light, and the auburn tinted leaves assumed still a richer colour in the sunshine. The blackbird and mavis were echoing the mellow tones of each other—the lark was singing his vesper hymn—the cattle were lowing in the fields—the reapers trudged home from their work in merry bands, whilst amongst them were heard the happy voices of urchins returning from the hills, their little caps filled with brambles, and their hands with thorns. The sun was just about to sink behind the western hills, and the harvest moon full, round, and scarcely less brilliant, made her appearance on the verge of the eastern sky, thus keeping up a perpetual day. The foliage of the trees, and the herbage of the fields, assumed a deeper tinge of russet. The grey shadows formed by the cold light of the moon, seemed like unsubstantial spirits hovering over the scenes of their former existence. The rays of the setting sun, and the rising of the moon, united and spread their glory over the still bosom of the Forth, on which floated some stately vessels, their white sails rendered still whiter by the brilliant stream of light in whose track they lay.

"Long, long did I gaze on that beautiful scene; and it was not until the shades of evening began to cover the earth, that I felt a chill creep over me. I trembled—I drew my slight scarf around me—I turned to descend the hill on my way home—a tall figure approached—I felt terror-stricken. The figure advanced still nearer—I stopped—I shriek-

ed—'Be not afraid, dear, dear Emily!' exclaimed the voice of Oliver Cauldwell. 'It is I, your brother.'

"Judge my astonishment at meeting so unexpectedly with one whom I had believed hundreds of miles away. 'Good heaven!' I exclaimed, 'Mr Oliver are you here? When did you arrive? Have you seen your father and your stepmother? Why are you here?'

"'I have not come hither with the purpose of seeing either my father or his wife,' replied Oliver. 'The image of my beloved mother lives so vividly in my memory, that I cannot believe she is dead. I have been wandering about all day long watching for you, dearest Emily! —you whom she loved so dearly—you whom I love to distraction.'

"'Stay, I entreat you!' I exclaimed. 'Already have I stated distinctly my feelings on this latter point. Do not insult me—let me look on you as a brother—do not mention love more—you are the only beloved son of my sainted mistress—I am your devoted servant in duty—you sister in sentiment, nothing more.'

"'Say not so! say not so, dearest Emily!' he tenderly exclaimed. 'Love levels all distinctions. I am prepared to endure all hardships—to brave all difficulties—but in your love alone can I find happiness. Listen to me one moment. I have now finished my college education—I wish to work out my own independence. Through the influence of a kind friend, a lucrative situation in India has been offered me. My father seems to have forgotten me—I have no wish to obtrude myself upon him. The vessel which bears me to India sails in a few days. I have sought this interview previous to my departure, to solicit your love, to ask you to give me your hand. Break not my heart by a refusal! You alone can fill up the vacancy in my bosom caused by the removal of my dear mother. Say, then, you will be mine! Let us be united in the holy bands of matrimony. To-morrow morning must I be on my way to Plymouth. To-night, or never, you must be my bride, my wedded wife.'

"Startled by the energy of his manner, I could make no reply; and, shall I confess it, but feeble opposition. His urgent manner, and affectionate expressions, flowing warm from the fountains of his heart, were altogether resistless; and, within a few moments, I, who had left Deanhouse alone, a friendless orphan, was the affianced bride of the heir to the lord of the village.

"No time was allowed me for hesitation or reflection. At a turn of the road we found waiting on us my foster-sister and her husband. Oliver had that day called at their cottage, and enjoining them to secrecy, had informed them of his intentions. Your grandmother, my dear Martha, who knew human nature and my heart too well, to believe that I could remain unmoved by such devoted love, had en-

gaged the clergyman to marry us, and arranged that we should stay all night at her cottage.

" I returned to Deanhouse, obtained leave of absence to spend the evening with my foster-sister, no very uncommon occurrence. Mr Oliver Cauldwell and I were married, under the roof-tree of your grandfather and grandmother, and next morning the new married pair separated with many vows and promises, with many aspirations and hopes all, alas! doomed, the former to be broken, the latter disappointed. Six months thereafter, intelligence was received that the ship in which Oliver Cauldwell had sailed for India had been wrecked, and that all on board had perished.

" The effect of this disaster on me may be better imagined than described. I was young and inexperienced—I was poor and comparatively friendless—I was a wife, privately married, and about to become a mother. The babe which I felt struggling within me was no doubt the legitimate offspring of the heir to the estate of Dean, but what chance had I, a friendless orphan, of being able to establish that claim, when opposed by Mr Cauldwell's second lady, who was an ambitious woman, and had given birth to Mr Archibald, the present proprietor. No one had seen Mr Oliver during his last visit, excepting the clergyman who married us, and the friends in whose cottage we were married. The clergyman was of a timid and retiring nature, and was moreover the presentee of Mr Cauldwell. Your grandfather, Martha, also, was almost entirely dependent on that gentleman, he being his chief customer. I was oppressed with gloomy forebodings, and overcome with a sense of poverty and dependence. With the advice of my friends, I resolved to conceal the event which was about to take place. I obtained leave of absence from Deanhouse, and in your grandmother's cottage gave birth to a son—that son, who now bears the name of Forrester, and who has now, heaven bless him, returned amongst us after so long an absence. The village surgeon procured a nurse for the child, who resided at some little distance. I returned to my employment without being suspected, and your grandmother some time afterwards took the boy into her keeping—the surgeon obligingly taking the merit of paying his board. Of course I was a frequent visiter, and found the boy so happy, that I was easily induced to delay asserting his claim, until some more favourable opportunity. I felt the more security in following this course, that I had a marriage certificate from the clergyman, attested by my foster-sister and her husband, through which evidence I could at any time establish my boy's legitimacy. He was not a loser but a gainer in being brought up under the humble roof-tree of your grandmother. I remained in the Deanhouse, and to my care was committed the rearing of the

boys, Archibald and John Cauldwell. I became much attached to them and to the family. I postponed from time to time disclosing to my son the secret of his birth, and at length resolved to keep it from him until he arrived at the years of discretion. Before he had reached that period of life, however, he ran away to sea, and I never heard of him again until that day, when I had the happiness, the delight, my dear child, of communicating the tidings of his return to you and your mother.

"I had long resolved to carry my secret with me to the grave, and see yet little use for its revelation. The close and friendly intercourse now established between my son and his own family, that family with which my fate has been so closely linked, is exceedingly agreeable to my feelings; and, oh! my dearest Martha, could I hope to see you the bride of one who I am persuaded loves you dearly, Mr John Cauldwell, how cheerfully would I spend the few days I have to remain on earth—how happily and contented could I die. And now, my dear child," continued Maillie, as she pulled from her breast a small locket, containing the certificate of her marriage, "this document do I entrust to your keeping, preserve it carefully. It may be an object of some interest in after years to you, and my dear young friend Mr John Cauldwell."

"And in whose keeping it had better, in the meantime, be, my dear madam," said Jack, suddenly entering, walking smartly up to Maillie, and snatching the locket with an affected playfulness from her hand. "I have to entreat your forgiveness for this intrusion, but I had no alternative. I was anxious to enjoy half-an-hour's chat with you, and while our friends were regaling themselves at Lasswade, I rode up here on my way home. I knocked loudly at the door of the apartment, but you were so engaged, the one talking and the other listening, that you paid no attention to me. Knowing all the turnings and windings of the house, and being aware that there was a door which opened from another passage, I stole into your room, intending to have surprised you; but having heard our family name made use of, in your narrative, I was rivetted to the spot, and have thus listened to the latter portion of your story with deep interest. It is a strange and eventful history. And, oh! might I hope that you, Miss Forrester, would look upon this event in the same light as I do, that you might perceive the finger of Providence overruling our destinies, and blending our fates together. Would to heaven I might hope for a realization of such bright and happy visions!"

"Dear, kind boy," exclaimed Maillie. "This is such a meeting as I have longed to see. Speak to him encouragingly, Martha. Give him hope for my sake, for his sake, for all our sakes, Martha, I entreat of you!"

"Forbear to urge this matter further at present," said Martha. "It is scarcely fair. I am young, inexperienced, and dreadfully agitated. I have besides a mother."

"Speak on, speak thus my angel," exclaimed Jack, falling on his knees, and clasping his hands on the locket which he still held fast. "I shall wait on your honoured parent, and despair not of returning soon to you with her blessing on our union."

"Stay, stay," said Martha, now recovering all her wonted energy and firmness. "I must undeceive you at once and for ever! However willing I might have been to listen to your suit, and however highly I might have felt the honour of an alliance with your family, under other circumstances, my heart and hand are solemnly engaged to another,—to one in humble life, indeed, but having on his forehead the stamp of nature's own nobility. I feel grateful for your wishes, and shall ever be anxious to retain your friendship; but urge me no more with your suit as a lover. Seek for one elsewhere, one whose habits and tastes may be more congenial to your own."

"Ah, Martha!" exclaimed Jack, rising from his knees, "every sentence you utter makes me more aware of the priceless value of the jewel which I cannot possess. Still, I shall not be denied the privilege of listening to your dulcet-toned voice, of gazing on your angelic form. Leave some little spot for hope to rest upon; let some little light peep through the chinks of the prison-house of despair. I shall yet win your gratitude, if not your love. Intercede for me, Maillie; your locket and your secret shall be safe in my keeping. I shall return soon. I am now away to town, to ascertain that my orders have been obeyed, relative to staying proceedings against Philip Lauder. Poor fellow! he must be saved;" and away he rushed, leaving Maillie and Martha to talk and think of his kind interference in behalf of the poor carpenter, while Jack exclaimed to himself, after he was fairly out of hearing, "Cheer up, Jack, my boy! always in time to prevent mischief. Dangerous business this might have been!—a new heir to the estate of Deanhouse. No, no; will take care of that now. The girl may take whom she lists, although we sha'nt let her off without a strong effort. But this is all right," he continued, as he opened the locket and unfolded the certificate. "Ay, ay, 'Certificate of marriage between Oliver Cauldwell and Emily Mathison.—Neil Hamilton, minister;' ay, ay, faith, all correct. We shall take care of this, and every thing else of a similar kind;" and he gave his steed the spur, and hurried onward to carry out the various schemes of mischief he had in contemplation.

Jack had a deep game to play, and it was necessary it should be played warily as well as quickly. In the first place, he proceeded to the Post-Office, where he found his friend, Blackwhiskered Tom.

anxiously awaiting him. He hastily informed his associate of all his proceedings during the day—told him of the discovery he had made anent Forrester's parentage, and committed to his safe keeping Maillie's marriage certificate. He then apologized for his absence, and said he hoped he was not too late.

"In good time, in good time," said Tom; "just about to send for you. That old woman, about whose money we arranged last night, has just been here in a fearful state of excitement. She is off to ask advice in the matter, and will be back presently. I went up this morning to Twopenny's barrack, by way of awaking him; found the lazy rascal in bed, whistled to his favourite blackbird, and popped the old woman's identical notes into his cupboard."

"Good! Excellent!" chuckled Jack. "Then let the dogs loose on him directly. D—d hard that we can't come by a trifle in that way now without discovery. People are surely getting devilish sharp-sighted."

"Sharp as needles," said Blackwhiskers. "Good soul, too, long-necked Twopenny—useful—lies like truth. Heavy affair this—hanging match, I fear."

"Bah! Let him swing," said Jack; "his long neck was made for hanging. Look sharp, and let the trick be done neatly. Good bye; I'm off to Snacks, to urge him to push and punish that fellow, the carpenter, to the utmost—'Bye."

Poor doomed Twopenny Tam sat that afternoon in his garret alone—alone, did I say?—Tam was never alone. He was a solitary bachelor, a recluse, in the eyes of the world. He was friendless and kinless, nobody knew anything about him, farther than that the oldest and the most respectable of the citizens of Edinburgh had no recollection of any other permanent postman but Twopenny Tam, and knew nothing of Twopenny Tam but as the postman from time immemorial. Very old, then, Tam must have been: still he looked but a middle-aged man, hale, fresh, and healthy; and notwithstanding his prodigious long neck and long, lean body, he seemed capable of enduring immense fatigue. Coolly, very coolly, did he take every thing; and it was often observed, that even after ascending to the top of the long stairs in the High Street, a feat not generally accomplished without some hard breathing, Tom was always as cool as a cucumber. Respectable was he also, for even the Lords of Council and Session thought it no derogation from their high dignity to exchange jokes with Tam in the very middle of the Parliament Square; and it was whispered that more than one of these said dignified personages were in the habit of visiting Tam's garret in the West Bow.

Tam occupied an attic in one of the tallest houses in that singular

locality. The house was some eight stories high, and the roof was flat, covered with lead, and bartizaned round. In the very midst of this roof, as if originally intended for a watch-tower, rose Tam's airy dwelling. It was a small circular apartment, having a small window that opened behind a huge chimney-stalk, and a door that led to the house-top; and the house-top, in fine weather, was Tam's favourite resort. The house was admirably adapted for such a character as Tam, who, though subsisting by the calling of a postman, devoted much of his time to exploring the wonders of the animal kingdom. He was a most enthusiastic lover of nature, and his house and house-top were filled with birds, beasts, and creeping things. He had pigeons, blackbirds, mavises, larks, guinea-pigs, and rabbits; and he never passed the green grocers' stalls at the Tron Church, without providing himself with an armful of vegetable refuse to feed his favourite animals. Amongst these were a solitary pair of bantams, cock and hen, and it was these birds, probably, that knit Coal Jock and him so closely together. Jock had often attempted to coax Tam to part with the male bird, but Tam resisted all Jock's tempting offers, by remarking, "That, but for the cock's morning craw, the laverock wadna ken when to begin his sang, nor the tinkler bodies when to begin their clinkin'."

When Tam delivered his Grassmarket letters on a market-day, he always got a handful of corn from every sample sack for his favourites, and the grocer's wives gave him lumps of loaf-sugar to carry home to his singing blackbirds. For training birds, no one among the many musical cobblers in town could match him; and it was supposed that the whee-ee-ow with which he prefaced all his speeches had been acquired by his continuous efforts to teach his birds his favourite air of "Over the water to Charlie."

The boys of the neighbourhood, however, insinuated that the birds, while lilting the said melody, seemed always attempting to articulate, "Twopenny Tammie, the postman!" and some local bard having strung together the following effusion, the young gutterbloods used to chant it under Tam's window with great animation.

TWOPENNY TAMMIE THE POSTMAN.

Let windy bards blaw o' great men they ne'er saw,
They're welcome to brag an' to boast, man;
But come, let us sing, an' gaur Auld Reekie ring,
Wi' Twopenny Tammie, the postman!
Sic hopes an' sic fears, ah! sic smiles an' sic tears,
He sells, an' just twopence the cost, man;
See! see! young an' auld wi' what speed they unfauld
The letters o' Tammie the postman.

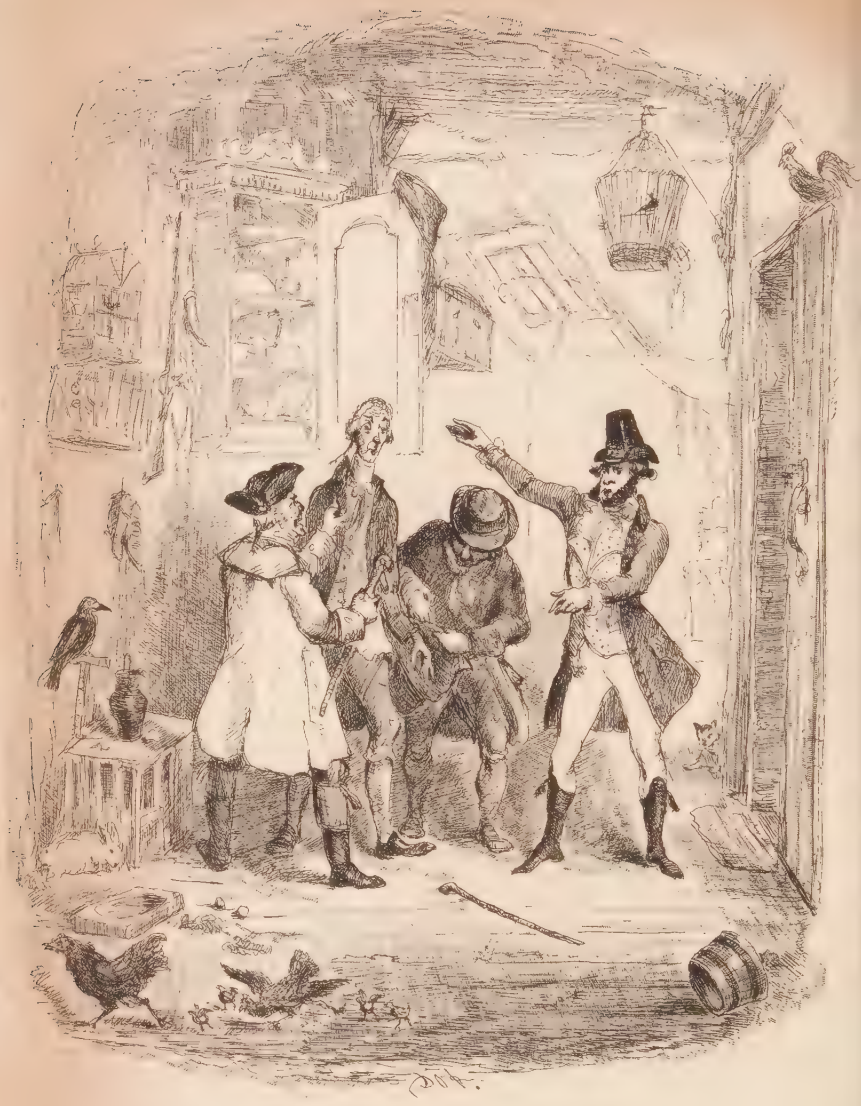
He's Hope's fairy messenger, bearing soft sighs,
To maidens wham love may have cross'd, man:
How brightly Love's flame flashes frae their dark eyes,
At slee keek o' Tammie the postman.
But oh! when a black letter comes hame to tell
Of a dear husband shipwrecked an' lost, man,
The puir widow shrieks, as she heard the dead knell,
While tears flow frae Tammie the postman.

Our stately Lord Provost, wha's worth an' wha's fame
Are themes for each fou bumper toast, man,
Will leave in the street e'en his ain queenly dame,
An' rin to meet Tammie the postman.
For aiblins the order o' knighthood is there,
Look! look! how the seal is embossed, man;
"A Baronet's name sounds sae weel in a chair,"
"Ye're sure o't," says Tammie the postman.

Twopenny Tam was an enthusiastic lover of nature. He delighted in green fields and still waters, and walked every morning at least two miles out of town, as he said and believed, for the purpose of gathering chick-weed; but his real motive was an indescribable and resistless desire to gaze on the beautiful landscape at sunrise, or to inhale the sweet breath of the morning air, as it sported over the green fields in playful wantonness.

There were periods, also, when Tam got leave of absence from duty for a few days. On these occasions he went into the country, leaving his house and its inmates in charge of an old woman who resided in the land, and who, it was alleged, had made several desperate but unsucessful attempts on the heart of poor, innocent solitary Tam. When Tam went off on these expeditions, he generally went arrayed in shooting graith, for Tam was over and above all a bit of a sportsman;—the said shooting graith consisting of a leathern coat, leathern breeches, and leggins. I do not think he had the licence, or infringed either on the spirit or the letter of the game-laws, for the trophies of his dexterity which he brought home were generally some pretty coloured birds, such as jays, whose wings Tam said rivalled the deep blue of the sky, or a few squirrels, or perchance, a pheasant; but this latter was always for some particular friend, to whom it was sent home with Tam's best respects and kindest wishes.

On the afternoon of that day on which Game Jack and Black-whiskers were plotting poor Tam's destruction, that good, kind, innocent creature sat on his house-top as much alone as a man with such



TWOPENNY TAM ARRESTED.

a family around him could possibly be. He was munching a piece of brown crust, and a bit of cold meat, and had a small bottle of black cork beside him, with which to wash over the rather dry sort of viands on which he was regaling. There, then, he sat nibbling and whistling away with his favourite animals around him. Now would he whistle a portion of "Over the water to Charlie;"—then would a young blackbird essay an imitation;—then would Tam commend the effort, by pitching in a green leaf beside the warbler;—then would the others look with envious eyes, until they were served in a similar manner;—then would the little bantams strut up and tap with their little bills on their master's shoes;—then would Tam strew a handful of corn over the roof, until pigeons, and bantams, would scramble and pick away in all the pride and pomp of peace and plenty.

Tam had nearly finished his dinner, and had got the junior blackbird, formerly alluded to, the length of halving the word "Charlie," when he was aroused from his delightful and harmless amusement by a violent knocking at the door. In his usual cool and easy manner, he sat still for a second, waiting a repetition of the knock, when he heard the voice of Blackwhiskers exclaiming, "Open your door, you knave! I know you are within, so open at once. We come in the king's name, and must have admittance. Open this instant, or we shall force the door. Why is it locked?"

"Because I was out on the house-top," said Twopenny, as he drew the bolt, and admitted Blackwhiskers, "and I aye lock my door when I gang there. Somebody might come in else."

"Yes, and discover your roguery, you scoundrel!" said Blackwhiskers. "Where have you hidden these ten pounds you extracted from that poor widow's letter the day before yesterday?"

"Ten pounds!—letter!—day before yesterday!" exclaimed Tam, apparently trembling with terror and apprehension. "What of them?"

"Yes, yes," said Blackwhiskers, turning to the two thief-takers whom he had brought with him, "you hear how the scoundrel confesses it? Do your duty. Take hold of him—search his person—search his house. What have you made of the money, Sir? Come, Sir, tell us at once, and save us trouble? It may be better for you. Shame! shame to plunder the widow."

"I havena plundered the widow, nor ony body else," replied Twopenny, affrighted. "Indeed, I haenae, and wadnae for worlds. Sae gin sic a thing has been done, ye maun seek for the siller somewhere else. Ye'll no find it here, I warrant ye."

"Come, come old boy, fork out?" said one of the thief-catchers. We know all about it—no use denying."

"Don't trifle with the rascal!" exclaimed Blackwhiskers. "Search—search. My information must be correct. Search that dark cupboard there, and you will probably find it. We will then see what the knave has to say for himself. To work, men—search away, men."

The men searched and explored every corner of that ancient mysterious-looking cupboard. They turned out every article it contained, while Twopenny stood apparently very much frightened. At length, however, when there was no money to be found, Twopenny, as if now half convinced of his own innocence, compressed his lips together, contracted his left eye, and exclaimed—

"Whee-ee-ow! gin ye find ten pund in my house, I am a richer man than I had thought mysell."

"We'll make you out, man, never fear," exclaimed Blackwhiskers. "We'll prove you a vile plunderer of widows and orphans—an extracter of money from letters. Have you got the money, men?" he added, addressing the thief-takers, who were still busy searching.

The latter, however, neither had nor could find any money. Blackwhiskers rushed himself to the cupboard, thrust his arm into the place where he had deposited the cash that very morning, but he was equally unsuccessful. Thunderstruck, he turned, and fixed his basilisk glance on Twopenny. He felt he had been overreached; yet he saw nothing in the expression of the culprit's countenance to indicate that he knew anything of it. How had the money been spirited away? Again the search was renewed. Every corner of the house was ransacked; nay, even poor Twopenny's pockets were turned inside out, when his whole stock of cash was found to be exactly the sum corresponding to his soubriquet, namely,—"Twopence." Enraged beyond measure at being so entirely baffled, Blackwhiskers ordered the officers to take Tam into custody, march him off to jail, and watch him closely, lest he should drop the money by the way. "Away with him!—away with him!" exclaimed the ruffian. "It is dangerous for honest people to have anything to do with him. I have witnesses to prove that he took that letter, with the money in it, out of the office; so lock up his door—seal it, and let us be gone."

Had Blackwhiskers glanced at this moment at Twopenny, he would have seen his mouth again compressed for a whee-ee-ow! But he stoutly suppressed the significant exclamation. The money, it may in the meantime be mentioned, was safe under lock and key in a quarter that Blackwhiskers little could have suspected.

CHAPTER XVI.

A friend in need
Is a friend indeed.

Old Proverb.

IT will be recollected that Philip Lauder, after parting with Martha Forrester at her mother's cottage door, set out for Deanhaugh mill, to seek the friendly advice of Miller Flemyng. The miller had always been Philip's chief counsellor; and the latter reposed, as he well might, the most implicit confidence in the former's shrewdness, sagacity, and sterling honesty. On arriving at the mill, however, Philip learned from the foreman that Flemyng and his henchman, Coal Jock, had gone off to Edinburgh on some secret expedition. At an early hour in the morning, a strange-looking man, with an uncommonly long neck, had come seeking Jock, who had introduced him to Flemyng. The three had then adjourned to the miller's little snuggery, where they had remained engaged in earnest conversation for nearly an hour. At the end of this time, the stranger had gone away, and had been shortly thereafter followed by Jock and the miller. Neither of them had made their appearance since; and the foreman remarked, that it must be something of great importance that could keep his master so long away from the mill at that time of the day. Never, save on market days, with one solitary exception, had Miller Flemyng, throughout a period of thirty years, been absent from his mill during working hours.

Greatly disappointed at not finding the miller, Philip left the mill in a very dejected mood, and in great perplexity as to what he should do. Should he go up at once to the banking-house of Messrs Chance, Snacks, & Co. and crave indulgence; or should he follow old Cauldwell to his brother's house, and endeavour to prevail on him to renew the cash-account, until the building should be farther advanced, when possibly the work might pay better, and the contractors might be able to meet all their obligations. But poor Philip could not summon resolution to enter a great banking-house as a suppliant, neither could he think of going to Lawyer Cauldwell's, where he might possibly meet

that gentleman's son, whom he now more thoroughly despised than ever. Philip felt that he could have stated the case to old Cauldwell himself; but he could not endure the idea of doing so in the presence of others. A suspicion, too, had crossed his mind, that Flemyng had heard of his misfortune, and had gone out of the way to avoid him. Shame on man that he will at times ungenerously suspect his best friend! But how delightful the feeling when, on second thoughts, he is convinced that his suspicions are unfounded!

With a heavy heart, and slow and languid step, Philip proceeded towards the village of the Water of Leith. What was it to him that young smiling May was robing nature in her kirtle of green? What—that at every step he could see boughs bursting into bud, and buds bursting into leaf and flower? What—that every birth was heralded by a joyous and melodious concert among the little feathered minstrels of the woods? What was it to him that the streamlet kept careering merrily and musically along, as if ambitious of attracting his attention? What—that the blue sky stretched pure and cloudless above him? His heart was sad and sorrowful, and all nature appeared to him a blank—every thing dreary and cheerless. Neither was he altogether aware of where he was, until he approached Waldie's smithy, when the sight of that well-known and much frequented rendezvous reminding him of its owner, Philip at once resolved on asking the honest smith to accompany him on his mission.

By this time it was noon—the hour when Waldie and Sprot uniformly adjourned to the public-house to take their meridian. The little poetical tailor was already in the smithy, waiting the appearance of Waldie, who was out at the time, and exhibiting manifest tokens of impatience for his coming—now rubbing his hands, now nibbling the points of his nails—now running to the door, and gazing wistfully up and down the road, to see if he could discover any trace of the absent smith.

At length, joyful sight to Sprot, the person of the worthy tradesman presented itself at the top of the road. He seemed, however, in a desperate hurry, and apparently in no very enviable humour. At this moment, Philip Lauder approached. On observing him, little Sprot started back, and exclaimed, "Hulloh! What? Philip Lauder here at this time o' day; gude sight for sair een. You money-makin' folk a' alike—canna spare as muckle time as swallow your bite o' meat, let alane your toothfu' o' drink. You'll surely tak your twal-hours wi' us the day—just in time—happy to see you."

"Gie us your hand, man, Philip!" exclaimed Waldie, who had just entered the smithy; "gie us your hand, puir fallow," he continued, at the same time slapping down his tools on the bench, and extending his

black horny palm to Philip. "D—d auld cunning rogue has ta'en ye in," he continued, in an indignant tone. "Didna I tell ye to tak care o' him—kenned him weel—see gin night."

"Who told you of my misfortune, Waldie?" inquired Philip, at once perceiving that the honest smith was aware of the position in which he was now placed, and anxious to ascertain if the rumour had got abroad.

"Heard a' e'ennow frae young Drawwell. Was sent for to the Dean to trundle up the auld ricketty coach, that has nae been out for thretty year. Cauldwell's gaun on a pleasure excursion in't. Had I kenned the story sooner, wad hae left the iron rings loose on the wheels, and letten the machine whomle up on the road—might hae gien them a fright, an' broken auld Drawwell's drumstick legs. No verra sound yet in the axles—aiblins may gang in flinders—see gin night;" and here Waldie set his teeth firmly together, grasped Philip's hand like a vice, and, with a tear glistening in his eye, exclaimed, "What can Waldie do for ye? Ony thing—name it—will gang through fire an' water for ye, man. Fa'en in bad hands—auld miserly scoundrel—day coming yet, though. See gin night."

"What's the matter, Waldie? What's the matter?" inquired little Sprot, much astonished and perplexed by Waldie's exclamations. "Gie me a swatch o' what's wrang."

"A's wrang thegither, Sprot," said Waldie; "that auld miser Cauldwell has gottin our friend Philip here to contract for the building o' Crooknook Mill at half price. Philip and Hastie hae contracted debts for materials, far beyond the value o' the sum they hae drawn. Auld Skinflint reaps the benefit o' this. The creditors o' the twa hard-workin' young men are cheated; the young men themsells are ruined; and that auld grippy gets his work completed for half its value. Hope to see him die a beggar yet. See gin night."

"My good, kind friend," said Philip, "Mr Cauldwell may not, after all, be so very cruel as we suppose. He has indeed withdrawn his countenance from us in the meantime, but he may yet be prevailed on to advance us a little more money. I am anxious to meet him to solicit this indulgence, and called on him this morning for that purpose, but he had gone out. I have been looking for Miller Flemyng, but he was not in the way, to ask him to accompany me; perhaps you will go with me to his brother's house. If successful, Hastie and I may come through yet."

"Ay, ay; aye the farther in the deeper, as the flee said when he got into the treacle-pot," exclaimed Waldie. "Bad business that mill, Philip; aye thought that the auld grip-gear wadna hae gien ye the wark to do unless to get a rug aff ye, at prices that nacbody else wad hae ta'en't in hand for—wad feed the auld screwin' miser on catgut. See gin night."

"Nay, nay, Waldie," said Philip, "you must not make Mr Cauldwell appear worse than he is; he had another offer at the same price, and my partner and I imagined ourselves highly favoured when we were preferred to the other party, who was said to be highly respectable."

"Said to be!" exclaimed little Sprott. Did ye no ken whether they were respectable or no—did ye no ken wha the other competitor was—did ye no see the name? I wadna hae taen the auld laird's word for't. Wad you, Waldie?"

"His word!" indignantly exclaimed Waldie. "I wadna take his word for a roosty nail. He's a liar, a cheat, and a miser; and what can ye expect frae sic a character. But, see gin night."

"Waldie," said Philip, "I would fain believe better things of Mr Cauldwell than what you allege. He is by birth a gentleman, moves in a respectable sphere, and surely would not forge a document for the purpose of entrapping me into a cheap job."

"Little use for him doing sic dirty wark as forgin'," said Sprot, "when he can aye get sae mony willing to do it for him. Tak ye my advice, and gin the warst come to the warst, tell your creditors that ye were led to tak the wark at sic low prices in consequence of seeing an estimate from another person, who was said to be respectable, but that the name of the party had been kept from you; your creditors will, you may rely on't, insist on seeing this document."

"Capital—weel done, wee Sprot!" exclaimed Waldie. "Man, that bit wee head o' yours is as clear as an it war made o' rock crystal. Come awa, Philip, lad, we'll crack o' the matter ower our twal-hours. Ye shanna want a friend sae lang as Sprot an' Waldie are to the fore; no, nor ye shanna want twa three bawbees to fight your way wi', sae lang as I hae certain trusty friends in my auld timmer kist! Honesty is the best policy—gets the better o' the rogues aye some time—See gin night."

Philip returned his two friends his best thanks for their kind intentions, wishes, and offers, but declined on the present occasion accompanying them to the place where they took their meridian. Neither would he accept Mathew's offer of money. He never would, he said, apply that worthy man's hard won earnings to defray debt which had been contracted to enrich another. He prevailed on Mathew, however, to promise to accompany him to Lawyer Cauldwell, having previously agreed that if the laird refused further advance, they would threaten him with exposure, and state to him, that it was their intention to lay the whole matter, with all its suspicious, attendant circumstances, before the creditors. As Mathew and Sprot, however, could not part until they had their "twal-hours," the one laid hold of Philip's right arm, and the other his left, and insisted on his accompanying

them to the public-house which Waldie patronized. Just as they were in this position, Philip gently resisting the united efforts of his friends to drag him along, two long-whiskered, ill-favoured looking fellows, in blue coats with red collars, and wielding each an enormous cudgel, sprung round the corner of the smithy, and seized Philip by the breast, one of them exclaiming, "Don't trouble yourselves conveying Mr Lauder any further, gentlemen, he is now our prisoner, at the instance of Messrs Chance, Snacks and Co., bankers, on a fugæ warrant, they having heard that the young gentleman was about to take a trip to America. Come away, sir, if you please," the fellow added, addressing Philip Lauder, "you are now my prisoner. I shall take care you don't leave the country," and he tapped him on the shoulder with a small baton, which he took from his pocket.

"Leave the country! Leave the smiddy, ye red-necked scaurcraws! ye unhanged vagabonds!" exclaimed the smith irefully, seizing a huge bar of iron, "Tak you hands aff Philip this minute, an' mak yoursells scarce, or I'll split your fozzy skulls, as gin they were frosted field turnips."

"Off hands, sirs!" said Philip calmly, as with a slight effort he freed himself from the grips of his assailants. "Show me your warrant."

"Warrant! Couters, and brechams, but I'll warrant them!" exclaimed Waldie. "Wha e'er heard o' a warrant being executed in the Water o' Leith? Tell the callants to come out o' the smiddy, Sprot, an' let them tak the twa Embro' limbs o' Satan down to the Caudron, an' gie them a gude sousin in the water—they'll be muckle the better o't, for they are a pair o' dirty looking devils."

"Stop! stop, my friends!" said Philip, "the men are but doing their duty—although, why I should be thus arrested is a mystery to me. Nevertheless the law must be obeyed, and perhaps the sooner the whole matter is probed to the bottom the better. I am not destitute of friends, who, I think, will assist me. Show me your warraut!" he repeated, turning round to the officers, who stood by, and who looked not a little alarmed by Waldie's threat.

Relieved of his fears by Philip's mild demeanour, one of the men immediately pulled the warrant from his pocket, and showed it him. In this document it was stated: "That, whereas, Messrs Chance, Snacks and Co., bankers in Edinburgh, had, on oath, declared in presence of the Sheriff of the county, that John Hastie, of Lauder and Hastie, had left the country, with the intention of defrauding his creditors, and as they, the said Messrs Chance, Snacks and Co. had good grounds for believing that Philip Lauder, the other partner in the firm of the said Lauder and Hastie, was meditating flight also; and whereas, moreover, the said firm were resting and owing the sum of £ to the

said Messrs Chance, Snacks and Co., a warrant was craved to seize and secure the person of the said Philip Lauder, as *in meditatione fugæ*. In accordance with said request, the warrant is hereby granted," &c.

Philip was both astonished and confounded to learn that Hastie had absconded. What could be the reason of his taking this desperate step? Had his weak and timid nature been alarmed at the idea of going to jail? Very probably it had, for Philip recollected poor Hastie's confused and distressed manner on the morning when he announced to him how matters stood; and the knowledge of his partner's weakness gave Philip new strength and fortitude to face his misfortunes. He now told the officers that he was ready to accompany them, and advised them to take the back road until they were clear of the village, not to avoid exposure, but from a fear that the villagers, in their zeal to serve and assist him, would attempt a rescue, and probably do violence to the officers in the discharge of their duty. He also entreated Waldie and Sprot to remain quiet and peaceable, being convinced that he would soon be enabled to join them again with an unstained character. "Were you," he said, addressing his friends, "to interrupt the officers in the discharge of their duties, you would only make my case worse; a release effected by force would be of no service to me whatever."

By dint of such arguments, Lauder succeeded, though not without much difficulty, in persuading Waldie and Sprot to allow him to depart with the officers, although they threatened a descent on the jail so soon as the miller should make his appearance; and Philip heard the "See gin night!" of Waldie sounding in his ear long after he had lost sight of the honest smith, and the no less honest, warm-hearted tailor. The officers, rude and uncouth as they naturally were, seemed touched by the upright and manly bearing of Lauder, and kept at a little distance from him, until they arrived at the very door of the old jail of Edinburgh, in which prison he was to be incarcerated. It is well known that the old jail, or Heart of Mid-Lothian, stood in the very middle of the High Street, its huge shapeless form darkening and disfiguring the whole of that portion of the ancient city. It is also well known, that in this ancient receptacle of crime and misfortune, no distinction, either as to accommodation or treatment, was made between debtors and petty criminals; so that, with the exception of murderers and wholesale robbers or housebreakers, who were confined in separate cells, all the other inmates spent the day cheerfully together in a large, high-roofed, strongly stanchioned room, designated "The Hall," to which their friends had easy access at all times. Into this apartment was Philip ushered by his conductors, and in a short time had been cordially welcomed by all the inmates of this interesting establishment, who seemed

PHILIP LAUDER IN JAIL

to have the greatest delight in receiving an accession to their numbers. They all inspected Philip from head to foot, asked him a host of impertinent questions, affected to patronize him with their commiseration, and committed a great many other vagaries exceedingly amusing. One fat jail fed bird, who had been confined from time immemorial, and who was blown out like a bladder, not in front, but all round, until he looked exactly like a large bottle, or a bloated frog, asked Philip gravely, "Who was king now, and when the new king was to begin his reign, and set all the prisoners at liberty?" Another lean, shrivelled, close-cropped old man, in mean and scrimp attire, asked him, "If he had brought a few browns with him? He could get," he said, "swung up by the window, ale fit for a prince to drink. Jail beer was poor, thin skink for gentlemen who had drank claret after dinner every day for twenty years." A broken-down writer, with a suit of very shabby black clothes, a small peaked hat, and a very dun yellow-white neckerchief and frilled neck, asked Philip the particulars of his case, and obligingly volunteered his services to bring an action against Chance, Snacks and Company for false imprisonment. An author, who had achieved a reputation for writing last speeches and dying declarations, and who was here, he said, entirely from choice, and for the purpose of studying character, offered to write such an account of Philip's case as would procure his liberation within twenty-four hours after the immortal production had been laid before the proper authorities. Many other kindnesses were offered to Philip, and many other questions asked him, and to all Philip returned such answers, and made such acknowledgments, as seemed best suited to the humour of his fellow-prisoners.

Philip had been in this den of wretchedness for nearly an hour,—had fairly run the gauntlet of all his wonder-working, talkative companions, and now sat in a fit of gloomy abstraction, his head leaning on his hand, and gazing intently on the floor, when a little, old man, advancing from a small side-door into the apartment, fixed his eyes on him—scanned him narrowly—approached nigher—bent forward, and looked closely and steadily into his countenance. In another instant he seized Philip by the hand, exclaiming—

"What! Philip Lauder! you here already, man? Caged up at the end o' ae half year o' business. Hoot toots, man, I warstled on for twenty years afore I gat this length. How's auld Cauldwell, my auld laird—aye scrapin' an' screwin'—an auld skinflint, ye ken?"

Philip had started to his feet at the first sound of the voice that now accosted him. It was that of an old man of short stature, with a very broad nose, and two large goggle eyes. An inordinate use of snuff had almost closed up his nostrils, imparting to his utterance a strong nasal

tone, and rendering his dingy leathern cheeks still dingier, the whole being set off by a dirty face and unshaven beard.

The old man's form, though much dilapidated by years, was that of one who had been strong and vigorous in youth. He was, indeed, a perfect wreck, entirely broken up in body and mind, but he still retained the liveliness of manner peculiar to his class and calling. He had been a jobbing builder in the village of Blackhall for many years, and had been in the habit of purchasing his wood in small quantities from Philip's apprentice master, Pirie. At one time he had the reputation of being an honest industrious man; and Philip, who had not heard of him for some time, and had imagined that he was still following his humble calling, was astonished to meet him a fellow prisoner in the Heart of Mid-Lothian.

A natural anxiety to learn the history of each other's misfortunes induced Philip and the old man to retire into the little side-room, from which the latter had issued, and which he claimed as his private apartment, where they soon entered into a very interesting conversation.

"How long," inquired Philip, "did you say you had been a tenant in that shop of Cauldwell's at Blackhall?"

"For nearly twenty years," said Dippie Dinwoodie, for such was the name of this singular character, "an' I might hae been there yet, hadna auld Cauldwell, to whom I was awin twa three bawbees, roupit me aff, an' clappit me in here. I wrought hard enough, late an' early—took a wee drappie dribble, maybe whiles ower muckle; but we a' hae our fauts, ye ken. The auld laird might hae been canny wi' me: he canna expeck me to pay him here, ye ken. Queer auld chield Deanhouse—hang me gin I can understand how he keeps me here sae lang—the debt's aye growin' bigger, ye ken. I ca'd him a miser ance—he maybe keeps me here to show that he can part wi' siller when it brings him revenge. But what hae ye come here for yoursell e'ennow, lad? It's no him wha has sent ye here, surely."

"Indeed, but it is, though," replied Philip. "Along with another young man, I contracted to build a mill for Mr Cauldwell at Crooknook, at a price which apparently will not pay. Some one else, however, had offered to execute the work at the same price. Cauldwell tendered us the same terms, and offered cash to carry on the work. The first instalment is due—he has withdrawn his cash-account—the work has not been paying—and I am here."

"Ay, ay," said Dinwoodie, with an inward chuckle, "an' do ye ken wha the ither party was wha offered against ye?"

"No, indeed, I do not," said Philip. "I am very anxious to ascertain who they were, but have not as yet been successful. I would rather than the price of the building I knew."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Dinwoodie, "but it 'ill no cost ye sae muckle. Gin ye hae a saxpence to stand treat for a bottle o' yill, I'll be content, an' for that sma' matter will tell ye wha your competitor was."

"Wha was he! wha was he!" exclaimed Philip eagerly.

"Dinna speak sae loud, man," said Dinwoodie. "It was just mysell—deil anither."

"You!" exclaimed Philip, "how could you have estimated the work, seeing that, according to your own statement, you have been here so long?"

"Ay, lad," replied Dinwoodie; "but did Cauldwell no come up here, an' tak me out to see the plan o' the building, an' the place whaur it was to be built. He professed great confidence in my judgment, as he weel might, for I hae biggit a gey twa three houses in my day; so we gaed awa up to Crooknook, and calculated the dimensions thegither. I then priced the wark, an' he prigged my prices down. He tald me he was sure I could work fine at sic rates; and promised to clear my feet here, an' advance me cash to start wi'. I was sae anxious to get out o' this hole, that I wad hae promised onything to hae secured my deliverance, so I signed the estimate at Cauldwell's ain prices, whe, in return, promised that I wad be relieved frae prison whanever the wark was ready to begin. Day followed day, week followed week—months have elapsed since our meeting; and your incarceration here for attempting to execute wark below a remunerating price, is the first tidings I have heard of the building of Crooknook Mill."

What a tide of mingled feelings rolled through Lauder's breast while Dinwoodie was disclosing to him this instance of Cauldwell's meanness and duplicity. He felt ashamed at having been the dupe of such a miscreant, and was more grieved on that account, than for having been the victim of his rapacity. He felt grateful to heaven for having so providentially directed his steps to the only individual who could furnish him with evidence to prove his own rectitude. A tear rolled over the honest fellow's cheek, and his heart beat proudly in his bosom, as the fair form of Martha Forrester rose before his mind's-eye, and he rejoiced that now he would be able to stand forth with a character pure and stainless as her own. Poor he was, and poor he might remain; but the inward dignity of conscious honesty is worth untold gold, and in that quality Philip was rich indeed. Philip counselled old Dinwoodie to silence on the matter anent which they had conversed together; and now that he was convinced of the double villany and selfishness of Cauldwell, he resolved to seize the first opportunity to clear his own character, and fix the blame on the proper person.

Honest Halbert Flemyng was seen that afternoon making his way homeward by a bypath which he seldom frequented, and which ran in

a zig-zag direction along a steep and precipitous declivity that formed the south bank of the stream, and rose half-way between Deanhaugh Mill and the village of the Water of Leith. This pathway was very beautiful and picturesque, overhung with wild flowers, and covered with little round shining pebbles. But these wild flowers and pebbles were treasures reserved for the bold and adventurous hands of little folks, lively laughing groups of the village children, who ascended and descended this fairy ladder with the most perfect ease. Up these little hill-cut steps did they skip and run like goats, although at times their young hearts were grieved, and their childish eyes shed tears, as their little bundles of school-books, small pitchers of milk, or little caps, were precipitated to the bottom of the bank, and perchance carried away by the stream. This pathway, then, the reader may be well aware, presented no very tempting footing for such a solid piece of humanity as Halbert Flemyng; and it must have been some extraordinary occurrence that had induced him to take that road home on the present occasion. There he was, however, struggling and sliding downwards, now leaning on his staff, now holding on by the thick bushy and twisted roots that here and there projected from the bare and worn face of the bank. What had the honest miller been after? He could have no reason for taking that road but one, and that must have been a desire to avoid meeting any of his neighbours. Halbert Flemyng had never done anything which could bring the blush of shame into his honest face. Yet, on the present occasion, he sought to shun not only the villagers generally, but even his intimate friends and companions, Waldie and Sprot. Just as Flemyng had reached about midway down the path, who should make his appearance at the top of the hill, and commence a downward descent also, but Flemyng's faithful subordinate, Coal Jock. What on earth could be the cause of all this manœuvering? Something important must be in the wind, for ever and anon the miller, as he wrought his way downwards, paused, looked up at Coal Jock, of whose presence he was aware, gave a hearty chuckle, and a mysterious shake of the head, which signs were returned by Jock with a nod, a wink, and a shake of his fist, as if at some one behind, whom he seemed to threaten with bodily castigation.

It happened just at this moment that Waldie and Sprot, who, as the reader is aware, had been down at the mill inquiring for Flemyng, came sauntering up by the water-side on their way home, in very gloomy and desponding mood. The smith stalked onward, his bare arms folded across his breast, his shirt-neck laid back, and his shock, black head bared to the weather. By his side marched little Sprot, his little hat, which generally towered on the very top of his little sconce, lay back in a slanting direction, while, in inflated language, indignant

tone, and with significant gesture, the little orator seemed propounding some wonderful doctrine to his silent and somewhat apathetic companion. They walked onward and onward—then gazed up the road and down the road with keen and anxious scrutiny; still, he whom they sought made not his appearance. All of a sudden their attention was arrested by a noise from the bank which rose by their side. The sound of a heavier footfall than generally ventured on that rugged pathway caught the ear of the smith. He turned his eyes upward, and beheld the stately and portly form of Miller Flemyng. Did not Sprot and Waldie gape and gaze with mouth and eye at this strange phenomenon? What did it portend? Was Flemyng courting? and what was Coal Jock and he doing together? Was Jock really and truly performing the part of blackfoot? The sight of their friend had a miraculous effect on the smith and tailor. The smith burst into a roar of laughter, exclaiming,

"Hulloh, Halbert, where's your mouter? A meal pock for your meal, Jock, now surely. Hae ye been at Embro' seekin' her? Whan's she comin' hame? Lovers aye sly; but love winna hide.—See gin night."

"Hoots, man, Waldie, ye maunna find faut wi' honest Flemyng for gaun among the lasses. Better late thrive as never. Better marry than burn; sae ye fouter, Waldie, tak your friend's example."

"Indeed," said Flemyng, "I think you and I, Waldie, will be married in ae day. Ye'll gie awa me, an' I'll gie awa you—gude giers gie aye gude gifts. But here comes Jock—awa to the mill Jock, and see that a's right. Something gey pressing that took me awa frae my mill at this time o' day. I canna let ye into the secret e'ennow; but the cat will be out o' the bag by and bye."

"Ay, ay, see gin night," said Waldie; "but we hae something to tell you o', ye winna be pleased to hear. Gude, honest Philip Lauder has been sent to jail on a fugae warrant. Auld, deep Drawwell, a' his doin', d—n him. See gin night."

And here the smith and tailor jointly related to the miller all the particulars connected with Philip's imprisonment, and tears of indignation and commiseration chased each other down honest Flemyng's face, while he listened to the story. To think and to act was the work of a moment with the honest man in all cases of pressing emergency; and after having seen that every thing was going on right at the mill, he at once resolved to set out for Edinburgh, and to call at the banking-house of Messrs Chance, Snacks, and Company, for the purpose of ascertaining upon what grounds Philip had been incarcerated. Acting on this generous impulse, he immediately started off, staff in hand, Waldie and Sprot remaining for a short time with Coal Jock, whom

they in vain tried to sift, that worthy but meeting each attempt with a still more mysterious and knowing look, and, finally, refusing point blank "to gie them, as Sprot said, even a 'bit swatch' o' what had ta'en Flemyng and him to the town that morning."

When Miller Flemyng arrived at the banking-house of Messrs Chance, Snacks, & Co., he inquired for one of the principals, and was shewn into a private apartment, where Mr Snacks happened at the moment to be engaged with no less a personage than Mr John Cauldwell. The reader will recollect that when Black Tom had set off to capture poor Twopenny, Cauldwell had gone to urge his friend Snacks to all possible dispatch in the prosecution against Philip Lauder. To get that young man involved in difficulties, ruined and disgraced, was the chief aim of Jack Cauldwell. Let Philip once be made a bankrupt—let him be immured in jail, and how could a girl with the expectations of Martha Forrester throw herself away on one so desperately situated? He knew well that Messrs Chance, Snacks, & Co. would take all the responsibility of the prosecution on their own shoulders. The world and the creditors of Lauder would give the bankers praise for their vigilance. Such an achievement was well qualified to advance the interests of their establishment; and while they claimed and got the merit of pushing Lauder's affairs to a sequestration, John Cauldwell would obtain credit from Martha and her mother for his kind intentions in soliciting delay for Philip, although that solicitation had not been successful. Judge, then, of Jack's delight, when he learned from Snacks, that in consequence of Hastie having run out of the way when their bills were presented for payment, and Hastie's mother, with tears in her eyes, having told the bank porter that rather than face his creditors her son had run away, and left her without any means of support, Messrs Chance, Snacks, & Co. had felt themselves called on, for the behoof of all concerned, to apply to the sheriff for a fugæ warrant to secure the person of Philip Lauder, and lodge him in jail, lest he should have followed the example set him by his more timid partner.

When Jack learned from Snacks that Philip was fairly lodged in durance vile, he could scarcely contain himself—scarcely keep the joy he felt within bounds; and he had just failed in an attempt to clasp his dear friend Snacks to his breast across the broad desk that stood between them, when Miller Flemyng made his appearance. When the latter perceived that Mr Snacks and Mr John Cauldwell were on such terms of intimacy, his sagacity easily enabled him to infer at whose instance, and for whose behoof, Philip Lauder had been thrown into prison; and, accordingly, without deigning to notice the latter gentleman, he stepped forward, staff in hand, to the former, to whom he thus introduced himself, and the object of his mission:—

"My name is Halbert Flemyng, Sir," he said; "I am the miller of Deanhaugh. Philip Lauder, carpenter in the Water of Leith, is a young man in whose welfare I am much interested. I understand that he has this day been arrested and sent to jail on a fugæ warrant, and I wish to ascertain on what grounds, or under what pretext, that warrant has been obtained, and what amount of debt he owes you, at whose instance I learn he has been arrested."

"If you wish to pay his debts, Sir," replied the polite Mr Snacks, "I shall send you a note of them shortly, at least so far as they can be ascertained. They will be very heavy. Messrs Lauder and Hastie, I understand, are deeply in with several of our best customers. Hastie has absconded, and it was suspected that Lauder was about to follow his partner's example. Those who wish to get honestly through the world, you know, Mr Flemyng, must endeavour to secure themselves against such nefarious attempts; and you, I am sure, Sir, will not seek to palliate or excuse fraudulent bankruptcy."

"I am not here," said Flemyng, "to discuss that matter with you. I will put a plain question, and request a plain answer. What is the amount now due to you by Lauder and Hastie."

"Really, Sir, I cannot state the particular sum at present," said Snacks; "but I will, as I said, do so shortly. Meantime, Lauder, I can assure you, will be quite comfortable where he is; and I am more and more convinced that we were quite justified in the course we have taken."

"Ay, Mr Flemyng," exclaimed Jack Cauldwell, now coming forward, and addressing the miller, "was it not right to secure the person of a fraudulent bankrupt, who was on the eve of leaving the country, and leaving so many debts behind him? These young fellows might have realized a fortune by the aid of my uncle's patronage. Are you going to pay their debts? If so, I pity you."

"Reserve your pity for yourself, young man!" exclaimed the miller sternly, "you will require it all, or I am much deceived. With you, however, I have no business at present. It will be necessary," he continued, turning to Snacks, "that we have a meeting of the creditors as soon as possible. I repeat that I am deeply interested in the welfare of Lauder, and shall do my best to help him through his difficulties."

"Ay, poor fellow!" said Jack, "What will become of his suit with Miss Forrester now,—that match which you have laboured so hard to bring about. No hope now for him there. Miss Forrester can never think of marrying a bankrupt carpenter. My success is certain now, Mr Flemyng. Have just left the dear girl—all love—all kindness."

"Never!" exclaimed the miller, at once earnestly and contemptuously. "Never will Martha Forrester unite herself to an unprincipled

libertine, even although he should have been cunning enough to persuade her that he loved her for herself alone, much less will she be disposed to favour his views when she learns that that professed love was selfish meanness—originated after the party had discovered, by peeping into a widow's letter, that the said widow was likely to become wealthy."

"What, Sir!" said Jack, "advancing a step, and placing his hat with an air of defiance on the top of his head, "Do you mean to insinuate that I have done so?"

"I insinuate nothing, Sir," answered Flemyng, looking sternly at him. "I merely attempt to describe a contemptible puppy, whom I am convinced Miss Forrester will not marry. If the cap fits, you are welcome to wear it."

"Keep your knave's cap for your own fool's pate," said Jack. My conduct is above suspicion. My actions are beyond your vulgar comprehension. Good bye, old cock; we'll meet again."

"That we shall, and perhaps when you least expect it," said Flemyng, with a sternness of manner that overawed both Jack and his companion. "They wha wad rob the widow of her mite, and the orphan o' her virtue, never escape punishment. There's an all-seeing eye watching ower them; so beware, young man! Your dead knell may be tolled sooner than ye wot o'. I shall expect, Sir," he concluded, turning to Snacks, "that you summon this meeting to-morrow, when I shall be present on the part of my young friend, and endeavour to effect an arrangement." So saying, the worthy miller strode out of the banking-office, leaving Messrs Snacks and Cauldwell not a little perplexed and astonished. Snacks saw that Flemyng knew business well, and was not a man to be trifled with; while Cauldwell perceived that he knew more of his sayings and doings than was at all desirable. The former now summoned his clerk, and ordered him to call a meeting of Philip's creditors for next day; and, at Cauldwell's instance, who was most eager to bring Lauder into disgrace, the meeting was ordered at the Sheriff-clerk's Office, where, at the same time, it was announced Philip would be brought up for examination.

When Jack Cauldwell returned to the Post-Office, he found his friend, Black Tom, in very low spirits, and sadly out of temper. He bounded from his seat to meet Jack, shook him by the hand, and exclaimed in tremulous tones, very unlike his usual gruff, blunt, dare-devil manner, "Come away, come away! What's to be done—what's to be done? The ten pounds which I placed in Twopenny's cupboard this morning has walked Spanish, and cannot be got. We searched every corner of his house for them, but could not find them. The cunning scoundrel has discovered the cash and carried it off."

"Bah, Tom!" exclaimed Jack, "you don't say so. You don't expect me to believe this. Confess at once, now, that you gave the cash away to some dear friend. I shan't be angry—'pon honour I shan't. But don't attempt to deceive me. What's ten pounds to me? Had you said you required money, you would have had it to any amount. But you ought really to have left these ten pounds in Twopenny's house; their being found there would have been conclusive evidence, and would have saved us trouble."

"You know, Jack," said Tom, "that I am as deeply implicated in the business as you, and as anxious to get out of the cursed awkward scrape. It is scurvy in you, besides, to suspect so old a friend. I don't half like it."

"Pooh, my dear fellow," said Jack, "say no more about it. I should, perhaps, have done the same thing myself—only on the present occasion I should have wished it otherwise."

"It is otherwise!" exclaimed Tom impatiently, "and if you persist in your present assertion, I shall get angry with you in good earnest. I deposited the identical notes you gave me—those very notes that were in the widow's letter—in Twopenny's cupboard, and he, or somebody else, must have taken them."

"By — then, there is danger," said Jack, becoming pale in the face, "and we must be active. We have no evidence to convict Twopenny, and where the devil shall we get it."

"Faith, I don't know," replied Tom. "Do you know of any associate of Twopenny's to whom it is likely he may have communicated his good fortune when he found this money?"

"Not I," said Jack, "unless it be Coal Jock. I know he was acquainted with Twopenny—they used, in fact, to be boon companions."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Tom, "then he is our man. Where shall we find him? Is there any chance of his being at the club to-night?"

"I have it!" said Jack, "good thought. I will promise Jock what I know will secure him. Good bye. We'll go together to the club to-night at nine. Jock is almost certain to be there. D—d awkward scrape this—we must get out of it by some means or other;"—and the two friends parted, but not without some serious misgivings as to the result of their villany.

CHAPTER XVII.

How sair wi' them we loe to part,
Whom fate an' fortune ca's awa ;
How eerie to the lonely heart
The eerie hour o' gloamin-fa'
Old Song.

Miller Flemyng, after he had left the banking-house of Messrs Chance, Snacks and Co., made his way straight home, where he immediately set to work and wrote a long letter to Philip Lauder, condoling with him under his misfortunes, apprising him of what steps he had taken in his behalf, and of the course he meant further to pursue. He also wrote a note of consolation to another person, now also a prisoner in " The Heart of Mid-Lothian," and dispatched both by Coal Jock. As the honest miller, however, was no very speedy penman, it was pitch dark ere the former set out on his mission.

It was, indeed, time that consolation should come from some quarter to poor Philip Lauder, who was now weary and desolate. He had watched and waited all day long with a heavy heart; and every time the huge bolt had been withdrawn he had started to his feet, expecting to see his friend the miller enter. Ay, poor fellow, and another hope had entered his mind. He had hoped that a light footfall would be heard on the stair, and his busy fancy conjured up the fair form of Martha Forrester gliding into his dungeon, like an angel of mercy. But as hour after hour passed away, and no one came to cheer him, these flitting illusions served only to deepen the gloom that oppressed him. Every one's friend came but his. Wives came to see their husbands, children their parents,—but none came to ask for poor Philip Lauder.

The shades of evening began to gather over the city. Philip gazed anxiously through the stanchioned window that looked towards the Parliament Square. His attention was attracted by the small, dim lights that began to show themselves in the shops, rendering more profound the increasing darkness of the night ;—he scanned every form he could distinguish, hoping to recognize in it that of a friend ;—he heard the merry chuckling of the well-fed and portly citizens, as they waddled joyously onward, and in several of these merry sounds, he imagined he recognised the rich, jovial laugh of his friend Miller Flemyng. But, alas ! disappointment succeeded disappointment, till Philip fairly turned from the window, heart-sick, and threw himself on one of the forms.

where he sat gazing into the fire, with fixed and stedfast look, his whole bearing indicating deep dejection.

Philip had not been long in this position when a heavy, firm step was heard on the turnpike stair—a knock at the door followed—a huge bolt was withdrawn—when, after a brief conversation with the turnkey, Coal Jock made his way into the apartment—sought out Philip—shook him by both hands—and delivered to him Flemyng's letter. Philip was in ecstacies—he read the letter over and over again—he seized the hand of honest Jock—called him his friend, his kind friend, whom he never, never would forget, and evinced such lively gratitude, that poor Jock felt the tears chasing each other over his somewhat coarse and weatherbeaten cheeks.

Coal Jock had experienced very little difficulty in getting into the jail. His worthy master had furnished him with a silver key, which had at once unlocked its massive iron-bound doors. It was this talisman that had made the jailor lower the naturally gruff tones of his voice to a whisper when he admitted Jock; and it was by virtue of the same powerful agent that John was allowed to remain long after every other visiter was expelled. There the comforter sat on a low form, marvelling much at the varied countenances he saw around him, and mentally speculating on the various characters here congregated together. At length, who should draw near the spot where he sat, but old Dinwoodie. John had known him well at a former period, and in an instant the two old cronies were over head and ears in a very interesting conversation. Of course, talking *dry-mou'd*, as Jock called it, was not to be thought of between such old friends. Jock would treat the old man to a dram; and with the assistance of the turnkey, who did not seem unwilling to join them in their orgies, they soon procured and disposed of two or three measures of Kilbagie. Having obtained writing materials, Philip prepared a very long letter for Jock to carry to Flemyng. This was an excellent pretext for John to remain in waiting, although the honest man had another object in view not less important. He had dropped sundry mysterious hints to Philip anent a friend of his, who, he understood, was imprisoned here, but whom he had not seen among the others in the room, so that he suspected the poor fellow had been lodged in some solitary cell.

Lauder continued writing. The turnkey and Jock got more and more confidential—their conversation gradually beginning to sink to a whisper—till at last Philip distinctly saw the latter give the former a letter, with which he retired, returning in a short time with a sealed answer from the person to whom it had been addressed. It was for this, then, that Jock had waited; and when he arose from his seat Lauder, in handing him the letter he had just written, was astonished

to see how steady and fresh he looked after the amazing quantity of whisky he had swallowed, while his companions, who certainly had not taken more than their fair shares, were bordering on the last stages of intoxication. Again Jock shook hands with Lauder and with Dinwoodie, who attempted to accompany him to the door, but failed in the attempt. The staggering turnkey undid the bar, and Jock descended the jail stair, chaunting, for the edification of all concerned, the following ditty :—

Gin ye want to prove a frien',
  Hie ye to the jail, jo :
Gin your friend be worth a preen,
  He will offer bail, jo :
Gin the bail they winna tak,
  Aiblins he's puir, jo ;
Whiles a puir man's siller plack
  Will ope a prison door, man.

Jock, who had some little business of his own to attend to, now proceeded to the Edinburgh Cockfighting Club. He wished, for reasons best known to himself, to see Game Jack and Black Tom, and felt confident that he would meet both of these worthies at their favourite haunt. On entering the room, Jock found that these two accomplished young gentlemen had just arrived before him, and, contrary to their usual custom, were the first to welcome him.

" Come away, John," said Cauldwell ; " you look done-up, man. Will you have a raw nipper or a glass of hot, Jock ? I'll stand treat. Sit down, man."

" Na, na," said Jock, " it doesna become me to sit doun wi' my betters. I'll jist tak a cauld caulker stannin', since you will treat me. I jist ca'd to tell the club I wad hae twa fine birds in trim the morn."

" Capital, Jock ! Are they pure blood, genuine game ?" inquired Black Tom,

" Right, a' right," said Jock, while his left eye involuntarily closed ; " game frae the nebs to the taes—no a white feather about them, deil a ane, and kames like scarlet. They're jist rare beauties."

A shout of exultation burst from the whole cockfighting fraternity.

" Will they stand till't weel, think ye ?" inquired some one.

" Till they're torn to tatters," replied Jock.

" Don't know how we could get on without you, my boy," said Cauldwell, familiarly slapping Jock on the shoulder. " But come, empty your glass, and then let us adjourn to the side-room. I wish a moment's private conversation with you."

Jock complied, and followed Cauldwell to the apartment in question, when the latter shutting the door, and lowering his voice to a whisper, said, "You must, I think, John, be acquainted with the postman, Twopenny Tam. Have you seen him lately?"

"Oo, ay," said Jock, in a careless manner, "I ken him, and saw him this vera day, the ne'er-do-weel. What o' him?"

"Nothing that will astonish you, I perceive," said Cauldwell. "But are you aware that he has been sent to prison, charged with having abstracted ten pounds from a poor widow's letter?"

"Heard something o't," replied Jock bluntly."

"D'ye think he has the money, Jock?" inquired Cauldwell.

"No me—I think naething about it," replied Jock; "it's no in my way."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Cauldwell; "then we must endeavour to bring it in your way by making it worth your while;" and here he slipped a crown into Jock's hand. "Did ye see Tam wi' money lately?"

"This vera day," answered Jock.

"Was there much of it?" inquired Cauldwell.

"I'll warrant there wad jist be the ten punds ye speak o'," said Jock.

"Indeed!" inquired Cauldwell, "and what did he make of it?"

"Ah, ha! it's no easy kennin' that," replied Jock. He tald me he had fund it; but I didna believe him."

"Where did he say he found it?" asked Cauldwell.

"In his ain press," said Jock.

"A very likely story, is it not?" remarked the former.

"Very likely!" repeated Jock. "I tell't him that cock wadna craw."

"Well, John," said Cauldwell, "you are a good, honest fellow, and you know it is the duty of every honest man to bring knaves to justice. That money which you saw in Twopenny's possession he had abstracted from a poor widow's letter. He is now in jail, and will be examined before the Sheriff to-morrow. You must come and give your evidence fully and freely—such doings must be put a stop to. Here is another crown for your trouble; and the situation of gamekeeper at Deanhouse shall be yours directly. You understand me—that as you saw this man with these ten pounds to-day, you must speak out."

"I'll swear to the truth through thick and thin," said Jock; and here they parted, Cauldwell rejoining his companions, and Coal Jock returning home, with an account of the result of his mission to his employer.

In a short time after Jack Cauldwell had left Maillie and Martha together at Thornie Dell, the former, much exhausted, relapsed into a

state of total abstraction; while the latter, having assisted her to retire to a small dormitory adjoining, the old woman was put to bed, and shortly fell into a sound sleep. Martha watched over her with more than ordinary interest, as she thought on what a strange life her's had been, how full of romance and mystery.

Thus, while Maillie slept, and Martha pondered, time stole away, until it at length brought back her mother and Mr Forrester from Lasswade. The Cauldwells having set off for Edinburgh in their slap-up carriage, the widow and her relation had walked home together; and, during that walk, Mrs Forrester had rehearsed the leading points of her history to her brother-in-law, repressing, however, any thing that might have prejudiced him against the Cauldwells. Mrs Forrester was a peace-maker, and was more apt to overlook than to remember faults,—hence her anxiety on this occasion to promote, rather than interrupt, the friendly intercourse which had been so auspiciously commenced between Mr Forrester and the Cauldwell family.

Maillie still continued to sleep on, although occasional starts and mutterings gave evidence of troubled dreams. Her son stole into her little bed-chamber, gazed on her aged face, lifted and pressed to his lips the shrivelled hand of the unconscious sleeper, gently dropped it, and returned to his adopted sister and niece, to whom subsequently he communicated all the particulars of his stirring and eventful life.

He presented to them in vivid colours the misery and desolation of war—he told them that he had often marched over many miles of fertile country, and passed through many ruined villages, without having seen one living human being. He and his companions, he said, had felt relieved on coming to the last village on their route, before reaching the sea-port at which they were to embark for home, to perceive, amid the silence and desolation that reigned around, the form of a priest kneeling amongst the ruins of a church which had been burned down, while beside him knelt a poor female maniac, whom insult and brutal violence had deprived of reason. Dreams, remarkable dreams, were also talked of, and he recited the following poem, which, he said, was founded on an incident that had actually occurred under his own observation.

THE SAILOR'S DREAM.

" I dreamt a dream in my hammock to-night,
And it fills my vision still;
I awoke, all trembling in startled fright—
I fear me it bodeth ill.
I would we were home, and I were ashore,
Beside my own dear little wife once more.

I thought, that in my old grandmother's hut
Where joy had not been for years,
A christening party of friends were met,
But they were all shedding tears:
The parson, God bless him, looked meek and mild,
Baptizing with tears a fatherless child.

And my soul was bound in a fearful spell,
As I gazed and gazed again;
And I knew all around the old hearth well,
But I saw not my own dear Jane;
Yet I heard my name as the parson spoke,
And the mother shed tears, and I awoke.

This is now my watch, and the bracing air,
With the lull of slumbering sea,
May soothe my lone breast, yet still in thy prayer,
Good mate, oh! remember me;
And to-morrow night, if the breeze holds on,
I may clasp to my heart a new-born son.

But, lo! now a giant billow hath broke
Athwart the quivering deck;
The sleepers awake with the fearful shock,
And rush to arrest the wreck.
The ship holds her course o'er the baffled sea,—
But the poor doomed dreamer, oh! where is he?

* * * * *

The vessel now waits on the rising tide,
A slight fairy skiff draws near;
And a female ascends the vessel's side,
Deep blushing with bashful fear;
He meets not her eye,—down drops her fair head,
"My dream then is true—my dear husband's dead!"

And her bright cheek paled, like a fading flower,
Yet grief is mingled with joy;
In our little cabin was born that hour
A sailor's fatherless boy:—
And he who had sunk in an ocean grave,
Had a young son born on the ocean wave.

Some weeks had flown on, how swiftly they fly
When sailors are upon shore,
While joking, and laughing so merrily,
They think upon nothing more ;
One sweet summer eve, 'twas a bright sunset,
Jack stepped into the old fisherman's hut :

With affrighted look why starts he thus back ?
Ah ! a scene is passing there,
Makes him trace dark Fate's mysterious track,
And he bends him low in prayer :—
Within that hut while his bosom thus thrilled,
The dream of his messmate he saw fulfilled.

Day was now drawing to a close, and the shades of evening were every moment waxing deeper and deeper. Not a breath stirred the young opening leaves, nourished by the gentle dews which fell lightly on earth's new-born vegetation. The distant Esk was heard sweetly murmuring like a dreaming child—the little woodpecker beat his evening tattoo—while now and then a merry laugh from some group of little stragglers broke in upon the silence that reigned around.

The cottage of Thorniedell, as before described, stood on a gentle eminence, and commanded an extensive view of the beautiful valley through which rolled the Esk's silver tide. Being in a secluded spot, and at a considerable distance from the highway, its inmates were rarely disturbed by visiters of any kind ; but at present they were somewhat alarmed by a violent knocking at the gate. The gardener's wife, formerly alluded to, passed out of her little lodge, and hastened to obey the noisy summons, by opening the gate. She did so ; and in another moment a well known voice was heard exclaiming, " Is he here ?"

" Is wha here ?" inquired the gardener's wife.

" His honour, Mr Forrester, to be sure," was the answer. " He maun be here. Tell him I want to speak wi' him immediately."

" And wha will I say wants him ?" inquired the good lady.

" Deil's in the wife, do ye no ken me and my neighbour, wee Mark Sprot, here ?" was the answer. " I thought we were kenned a' gate. Never mind—just say to the gentleman that Mathew Waldie and Mark Sprot want to see him."

" Come away, Mr Waldie," exclaimed Forrester, who had overheard the conversation ; " come away, Mr Sprot," he continued, coming towards the door, to welcome the new comers. " I am most sincerely happy to meet you here. This is a pleasure I did not anticipate. How did you find us out ?"

"Find ye oot, Sir!" said Waldie, following Forrester into the house; "I wad hae fund ye oot e'ennow, although ye had been at the bottom o' a coal-pit. Heard frae that puppy Jack Cauldwell this morning ye were coming here. Kenned a' the road blind-een—came out. Couldna rest to tell you that the d—d scoundrel—beg pardon leddies—has putten Philip Lauder in jail, d—n them. Time about yet. See gin night."

"Philip Lauder in jail!" shrieked Martha, as she rushed forward, and with breathless anxiety gazed on the sorrowful expression of Waldie's countenance.

"What does this mean?" said Mrs Forrester. "Young Mr Cauldwell informed us this morning that his uncle had assisted Philip, and that the affairs of Lauder and Hastie were in a fair way for an honourable settlement."

"Fair way—d—d scoundrel!" shouted Waldie. "Fair way to get his foul ends served! The scarecraw, I'll thraw his neck next time he daurs to shove his nose in at my smiddy door. Auld Drawwell help onybody!—the miser hasna the heart to help himsell; wad rake the midden a hale day gin he thocht he wad find a boddle in't. His paw's like my vice—squeeze, an' pinch, an' grip a' they get a haud o',—the mair pity that honest Philip Lauder should be in sic fangs; maun be gotten out o' them. See gin night."

"Mr Sprot," said the widow, "will you be kind enough to let us know the particulars of this unfortunate affair—of Philip's imprisonment, I mean. Mr Waldie, I fear, is rather too much excited at this moment to enter into details, and I am warmly interested in every thing relating to my dear young friend."

Having made one of his best and most graceful bows in acknowledgment of the honour conferred on him, little Sprot proceeded to relate the required particulars regarding Philip's misfortunes. He then mentioned the steps taken by Waldie and himself to induce the friends of Lauder to active exertions in his behalf. He then informed them that Miller Flemyng was busying himself in the matter, and that a meeting of the creditors of Lauder and Hastie was to be held on the following day, in the office of the Sheriff, before which dignitary he was to be examined. "And so, Sir," he continued, addressing Mr Forrester, "Waldie an' I couldna rest until we cam to solicit you to come forrit, and see that the young man get fair play, poor fellow!"

"Good, kind friends!" exclaimed Martha, "I am certain Philip will not soon forget your active friendship. I, at any rate, never shall," she added, bursting into tears.

"Neither shall I," said the widow. "And, Oh, Sir!" she continued, turning to Mr Forrester, "I trust you will be induced to listen to our humble request with a favourable ear, and be present to-morrow to be-

friend poor Philip in his hour of trial. This is another instance of the hollow-hearted professions, the false and delusive promises of the Cauldwells. They are not to be trusted."

"Trusted!" exclaimed Waldie indignantly, "I wadna trust them wi' an auld horse-shoe. Auld Cauldwell wad steal, wer't no for fear o' hanging. He'll aiblins grace the wuddie yet. See gin night."

"My dear friends," said Forrester, "you may rely on my cordial co-operation in probing this matter to the bottom. Truth with me is beyond every thing; and if this young man Cauldwell has deceived me, we meet no more as friends. It is but fair that those who contract debts should pay them; but when the rich man, under the guise of benevolence, professes to patronize his poor neighbour, for the purpose of reducing him still further, he ought to be exposed and held up to universal execration. I shall attend to-morrow at Lauder's examination."

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" shouted the kind-hearted smith, regardless of ceremony; and seizing little Sprot in his arms, he swung him round and round like a child. "Hurrah, Mark Sprot! how's your wee feetie now? Are they sair, eh? See gin night."

"My feet an' my heart are baith hale now, Mathew," said Sprot; "I would walk three times the distance, without wearying, to meet wi' sic a welcome."

At the request of Mr Forrester, the visitors partook of a slight refreshment, although they had not come so far from home without sundry nips and tastings by the way. In fact, not to mince the matter, they had popped into every public-house they came to, not missing a single one.

After arrangements had been made for meeting on the ensuing day, Waldie and Sprot set out on their return home, caring little for the seven long miles they had to walk in the dark, and delighted with the result of their visit.

CHAPTER XVIII.

When we want,
Friends are scant.
Old Proverb.

N the forenoon of the day following that on which the incidents recorded in the preceding chapter occurred, a meeting of the creditors of Lauder and Hastie was held in the Sheriff-clerk's Office, for the purpose of having the former judicially examined, his partner, Hastie, having disappeared.

The Sheriff-clerk's Office, at that period, entered from a square court, situated near the bottom of a very long, dark, narrow close or alley, entering from the Lawnmarket, and, like the chambers occupied by the other officials and dignitaries of the law, was very small and inconvenient,—the whole accommodation consisting of but two rooms, of very limited dimensions, and a small closet, dignified by the name of the Sheriff's private chamber. A low-browed, arched passage, very dingy and grim, notwithstanding the layers of white-wash with which it was so mercilessly besmeared, divided the two chief apartments, and the private chamber was only separated by a slight, half-way high partition from the room commonly used for such purposes as bankrupt examinations, and, in which room, on the present occasion, a number of the creditors of Lauder and Hastie had already assembled.

A jolly, good-natured looking man, of middle age, and having a very red face, and a very white powdered head, occupied the principal seat, and seemed, by the free will and consent of himself and the other creditors present, to have been elected chairman. He wore a suit of rich, comfortable looking black clothes, a snow-white neckerchief, a full-breasted broad frilled shirt, and sparkling silver shoe and knee buckles. Ever and anon did this imposing personage lay his smartly turned up cocked hat on his knee, or hang it on the end of his staff, till he adjusted his neckerchief, or pulled down his long vest, which, not-

withstanding all his endeavours, again and again rose into wrinkles, in consequenceof the bulky protuberance beneath. This gentleman was a Leith timber-merchant, as well as a Leith bailie, and he was also a creditor to a considerable amount. Close beside him sat another person, with a brown, swarthy sun-burnt complexion, dressed in smart corduroy knee-breeches, grey ribbed stockings, and a broad flapped blue coat. This worthy was the owner of the quarry from which the stones for Crooknook had been obtained; and the firm of Lauder and Hastie were his debtors in a pretty large sum.

Close by these two open-faced and open-hearted individuals, sat Mr Snacks, of the illustrious firm of Chance, Snacks & Co. This gentleman was dressed out in the very pink of fashion, his fingers were literally loaded with gold rings, and his neck brooch sparkled with diamonds. His handsome form, which appeared exceedingly spare when compared with the two jolly fellows beside him, formed a sort of connecting link between them, and the thin, meagre, and starved like form of old Cauldwell, who now entered, and took his place beside his dear friend Mr Snacks. Old Cauldwell looked sufficiently melancholy as he shook his head, and exclaimed in dolorous accents, "Bad business—shameful business!" which expressions were re-echoed by the other parties present in accents still more dismal. A bankrupt in those days was always looked on as a dishonest person—failures were not then so common as they are now—and the poor unfortunate who had to face a host of angry creditors, was much and truly to be pitied. Jack Cauldwell and his worthy father were there, for no other purpose than to glory in the misfortunes of one whose upright and manly conduct Jack considered the chief obstacle to his success with Martha Forrester. Several other creditors of smaller note were present; and any one who had seen the number of excited and scowling countenances, or had listened to the undertoned murmurings of suppressed anger which gave indications of the storm about to be poured out on the devoted head of Philip Lauder, would have sincerely pitied him.

The Sheriff now entered the court-room, and in a short time thereafter, Philip Lauder made his appearance, arm in arm with Halbert Flemyng. The officers who had been appointed to conduct Philip from jail, assured of his having no intention to attempt escaping, followed the friends at a respectful distance. It was soon evident that the fact of a man of Miller Flemyng's character thus supporting and comforting Lauder under his misfortunes, had produced a sudden revulsion in his favour, and that, with the exception of Snacks and the Cauldwells, the creditors present were disposed to deal kindly by the poor village carpenter. The appearance of Philip, indeed, was much

in his favour. His tall, manly figure was shown off to advantage in the tight dress of the period, and a mingled flush of honest shame, and conscious rectitude, tinged his cheek, and gave additional animation to his intelligent countenance.

Old Cauldwell, who had previously been endeavouring to prejudice the creditors against their debtor, rose from his seat, and coming forward, held out his hand to the miller, as he thus accosted him—

"Fine morning, miller—fine work, eh? Bad job, eh? Friend in need—friend indeed, eh? Realizing old proverb, eh? Cost you trifle, eh?" he concluded, as he attempted to grasp the horny fist of honest Flemyng, who, however, would by no means allow such a freedom, but withdrew his fist from the grasp of Cauldwell, exclaiming—

"You an' I hae twa or three words to exchange before we shake hands again!"

"Ay, ay!" grinned old Cauldwell, "prejudiced I see, eh? Did not expect this from you, Lauder, eh? Told me you were doing well—a lie, eh? Feast at Colinton two days ago, looked as if you were getting rich, eh? Always thought so, eh? But old proverb—Set a beggar on horseback he'll ride to the devil, eh?" And then this old impersonation of Satan again grinned, and again drawled out his eh—eh—eh?

"Reserve your impertinent remarks for your own behoof, old man," said Philip; "your own conduct may become shortly the subject of comment, and all the impertinence and ingenuity you can muster may be required to assist you on that occasion."

"What, eh? Insult me, carpenter!" exclaimed Deanhouse. "Here is gratitude, gentlemen," he continued, addressing those around him. I have raised this beggar from the dunghill, and you see the return, eh? But I shall keep his feet fast. He shall rot in jail;" and here the old wretch snarled like his own little pug-nosed dog, and again fixed his basilisk glance on the object of his hate.

"By the word an' faith o' an honest man!" exclaimed Halbert Flemyng, here stepping forward, and throwing himself between Philip and Deanhouse, "gin your auld purselled mou gi'es utterance to sic anither sentence in my hearing, auld as ye are, feckless as ye are, an' rich as ye are, I'll screw that scranky nose aff your face. Do ye understand that, eh? Is that plain speaking, eh?"

"I take you all witnesses here!" exclaimed Lawyer Cauldwell. "My brother has been threatened, and, in my opinion, has a clear ground for an action of damages. What says your Lordship?" he continued, appealing to the Sheriff.

"Really, gentlemen," said the good-natured Sheriff, "you are very wrong. This is not a place for brawling, or for angry recrimination.

I therefore entreat that any unguarded expressions that may have been used will be overlooked on both sides; and I suggest that we should at once proceed with the judicial examination of Mr Lauder, that being the object for which we have met."

"My Lord," said Philip, "nobody can be more anxious than I am to have this matter thoroughly investigated; but before your Lordship proceeds with the examination, may I inquire on what grounds I have been apprehended, lodged in jail like a common felon, and brought here a prisoner?"

"It was asserted, young man," answered the Sheriff, "that you intended leaving the country, and on that ground a fugæ-warrant was granted for your apprehension. Had you no such intention?"

"No, my Lord," replied Philip, with great firmness and energy of manner; "no—such an assertion had no foundation in truth. So far from seeking to avoid my creditors, the instant I learned the unfortunate position in which I was placed, I went to Mr Cauldwell to solicit him to renew our cash-account, the withdrawal of which prevented us from meeting our engagements. Our employer, however, happened to be from home, but I explained the state of affairs to his nephew, whom I saw, when, to my astonishment, that person, the same whom I perceive here, coolly advised me to quit the country, and leave my debts as a remembrancer behind me. I on that occasion stated to the young gentleman in question my opinion of his advice, in such a way as ought to have convinced him that I never would leave my country with a dishonoured name. Notwithstanding this, and while I was in search of Mr Flemyng, to solicit his advice and assistance, I was apprehended in virtue of a fugæ-warrant, which must have been obtained under false pretences.

It might have been expected that Jack Cauldwell, who was not very remarkable for bashfulness, and who was, moreover, thus openly accused by Philip, would have come forward and at once given the latter's statement a firm denial. Upon the present occasion, however, Jack seemed to be confused and agitated, keeping behind his friend Snacks, whom he continued to nudge with his fists, until that gentleman rose to his feet, and thus addressed the Sheriff,—

"My Lord," he said, placing his hand on his breast, as if to stay the pulsation of his throbbing heart,—"my Lord—your Lordship, I think, will at once allow that it was full time to secure the person of Mr Lauder, when his partner had absconded. Men with neither capital nor stake in the country cannot be expected to be very particular about leave-taking. I have no hesitation in avowing myself the person at whose instance the warrant was granted; and in acting as I did, I can

only say that I was actuated by a sincere desire to serve the interests of all concerned, and to forward the cause of truth and justice."

"Certainly! certainly! good! excellent!" shouted old Mr Archibald Cauldwell. "We are all deeply indebted to you for your promptitude. We must give you a subscription-plate, eh? Smart young fellow that," the old Beelzebub continued, turning to the jolly Leith timber-merchant, and eyeing Philip; "right to nab him at once. Had he got fairly off, wouldn't have been easily caught again, eh?"

"That may be a' true aneugh, and commendable aneugh in ae sense, Mr Cauldwell," said the jolly-faced timber-merchant; "but I canna help thinking that the young man has been rather rudely handled."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr Snacks with great indignation, and contracting his nostrils, as if to express more fully the contempt he felt at this insinuation. "Rudely handled! Would you have silken gloves and taper fingers to be engaged in such a business? Would you offer a premium for bankruptcy!"

"Excellent scheme, Mr Snacks!" grinned old Cauldwell. "New joint-stock company, eh? Take well, eh? Rob gentlemen of their property, to enrich beggars, eh? Rudely handled, indeed! Handcuffs and fetters to all bankrupts and beggars!"

"Come now, Mr Cauldwell," replied the timber-merchant, "you are too severe. You canna put old heads on young shoulders. The young men have been muckle to blame, nae doubt; but the statement that Philip here has made appears a' true aneugh. I dinna think he had ony intention o' rinnin' awa; and I am aye for thinking a' body honest till they turn out rogues—that's my way."

"Weel said, man," exclaimed the miller, "and ye remind me o' what I might hae offered afore now, only I wanted to see how far the dislike that the Cauldwells entertain to my young friend here wad lead them. I'm willing to become bound as security for Philip's appearance at ony time he is required, and let him stand here a free man an' tell his story."

"'Od, miller," exclaimed the honest quarryman, "I wad maistly make the same offer on the part o' puir Hastie. I believe him to be as honest as he is timid. I hae kenned him since he was a wean, poor fellow. He'll hae cruppen into some hole through perfect terror."

"Gentlemen," said the Sheriff, "I think you should at once accept the bond of Mr Flemyng. We can make the responsibility large enough to cover all your demands; and if the young man run away, you have recourse on Mr Flemyng for the full amount thereof."

Neither Cauldwell nor Snacks could make any objection to this proposal, the offer was so fair, and the feeling of the meeting so favour-

able to the bankrupts. Accordingly, the bond was signed, and Philip Lauder was asked by the creditors to state, as briefly as possible, the losses the firm had sustained, and to explain the cause why they could not pay the debts they had contracted.

"Gentlemen," said Philip, "the reason why Lauder and Hastie are unable to meet their obligations, arises from their having entered into a contract with Mr Cauldwell to build Crooknook Mill at rates that would not remunerate them for their labour."

"Very good—very good this, eh?" grinned old Cauldwell. "Very ready way to cover extravagant living and lazy habits, eh? Hundreds would have been glad to have executed work at same prices. No work, no pay, eh? Didn't expect I was to set you up as a gentleman, eh? Not paid for labour!—where was the labour, eh?"

"Gentlemen," resumed Philip, without deigning to notice Cauldwell's impertinent interruption, "with your permission, I will relate my own story as briefly as possible, and it will be for this gentleman to disprove my statement, if he can. Shortly after having commenced business, I was sent for by Mr Cauldwell, who, after professing great regard for me, and stating that he meant to patronize me, showed me the plans of his intended mill, and desired me to give him an estimate for the joiner work. I made the necessary measurements; and being exceedingly anxious to get the work, I stated to him the terms on which I would execute it, considering these terms the very lowest by which a man could possibly live. In compliance with his own desire, I waited on him with my estimate, on seeing which, he feigned great astonishment at what he called my exorbitant rates of charge,—said that he had been most anxious to employ me, but that having got an estimate from another highly respectable person at rates much under mine, he did not feel himself at liberty to give me the work to execute. 'But,' continued my professed patron, 'perhaps you may have made a mistake; you are young in business, and probably have not funds to purchase your materials with ready money.' I candidly confessed that my finances were limited, and that my inexperience might have made me calculate somethings rather high. 'Well, well,' he said, 'I have got a clever young fellow of a mason to execute the mason-work. You must go together as partners in this job. I shall advance you money; you will then be able to purchase at cash-prices, and will then have it in your power to do your work as cheap as this other party, who, I am convinced, would not work without the prospect of enormous profits.' Encouraged by such promises, and allured by the prospect held out, I met Hastie, by Mr Cauldwell's desire, and we ventured on the work at the rates of our rival contractor. These rates were much too

low; and the consequence is, that, after having laboured hard for six months, we have expended on that building all our little capital, and have got behind in our payments, Mr Cauldwell having taken care to secure himself, by withholding our instalment to cover his cash-account."

"'Od this is a queer story, Mr Cauldwell," said the jolly Leith merchant, "and, if true, ye are muckle to blame. If the work has not been paying, it seems a very odd sort o' thing, an' no a'thegither fair, I think, to mak us pay the difference. It was rather keen to withdraw your cash-account so suddenly."

"Every one for himself in this world," chuckled old Cauldwell. "Simple man, beggar's brother, eh? Look after yourself, your friends respect you more, eh?

"An', pray Mr Cauldwell," said the miller, "may I enquire the name o' the party who offered to execute the work at the rates at which ye were paying Lauder an' Hastie?"

"It is not requisite that you should know the name of that party," here interfered Lawyer Cauldwell; "neither would it be commendable in my brother to reveal it. Is it not enough that you are informed, on the word of a gentleman, that the party is highly respectable, and one who would not offer to execute work below cost?"

"That can easily be ascertained," said the jolly quarryman. "The work can easily be measured, and it will soon be seen whether the money paid is a fair price for what has been done."

"Ah, ha, friend! catch me at that game," again chuckled old Cauldwell. "No business with measurements now. Their eyes were their merchants. All one to me whether work pays or not—persuaded, however, it would have paid capitally, if properly managed. Their competitors told me so."

"Then why not tell us at once, Mr Cauldwell, the name of these competitors," said the Leith timber merchant, who now began to evince an interest in Philip's fate, which Cauldwell was rather puzzled to account for. "Lauder and Hastie are young men. They state that they laboured hard, and lived sparingly, and yet the work has not paid. Had we an opportunity of consulting their opponents, we could at once determine whether the young men have, as you assert, been wasting our means in extravagant living; or whether, as they themselves maintain, our means has been sunk in your property."

"My assertion correct, my dear Sir!" exclaimed old Drawwell, "to be sure it is. Won't tell you the name of their rivals though—breach of confidence to do so. But, take my word for it, they are respectable and reputable."

"Gentlemen," said Philip, addressing himself to the creditors with great earnestness of manner, "if you will allow me a few minutes absence, I pledge my word to return, with evidence sufficiently strong to convince my creditors of the truth of my assertion."

"Bah! he trifles with us!" shouted old Cauldwell. "The evidence will be some lazy foreman, with a time-book in his hand, who will show you how many men professed to work, and how few did so; how much money was drawn, and how little expended. Proceed with the examination."

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed Philip earnestly, "I repeat, that if you will allow me but five minutes absence, I shall bring you a witness who may possibly make this old gentleman lower his tone a little, and who will certainly tell you a story much nearer the truth."

"Indeed, gentlemen," said the Leith merchant, "I think we ought to accede to this request, seeing that Mr Cauldwell declines giving us any explanation."

"I came here to examine, not to be examined," retorted old Cauldwell. "I am here as a creditor, not as a debtor. Time is precious. Nevertheless, let Lauder go for his evidence. It will be long enough before we get payment of our debts out of an old cash-book and a drunken foreman."

"Gentlemen," said the Sheriff rising, "there is now no farther necessity for my attendance here, and you will therefore excuse me. I have a note from my clerk, that a case for precognition awaits me in the next room. You can, however, remain here, and finish your business."

The person who had been brought up before the Sheriff for precognition, and to which the note he alluded to referred, was no other than our friend Twopenny Tam. The poor fellow had been led from the jail through the open street, bound by handcuffs to the wrists of two criminal officers, between whom he now sat in the Sheriff-clerk's room. Black Tom, his accuser, strutted forward, and welcomed the Sheriff with an air of confident assurance, while he cast a look of affected horror on his poor victim, whose long neck was stretched far forward, and whose head was bent almost to the ground. The Sheriff took his seat: the clerk prepared to take down the depositions of the witnesses, and Blackwhiskers stepped into the witness-box, as if he half expected, at the conclusion of his evidence, to be asked by the Sheriff to take a seat beside him, and assist him to cross-examine poor, simple Twopenny Tam.

The Sheriff could not contemplate the prisoner without an emotion of compassion. His Lordship had known Tam for years—had been

more than once in his primitive dwelling, and had always looked on him as a simple-minded, honest, harmless creature. It was not therefore without some painful feeling that, after the reading of the charge, the kind-hearted Sheriff having cautioned the prisoner that his depoposition might be used as evidence against him, put the usual question to the prisoner—

"Are you guilty, or not guilty, of this charge which you have just heard preferred against you?

"Not guilty, my Lord!" exclaimed Twopenny, raising his head, and looking the Sheriff full in the face, while the tears rolled down his withered cheeks, and his breast heaved as if it would burst. I am innocent—innocent as the unborn bairn, an' as God, in his gude time, will bear me witness."

"Indeed!" said the Sheriff, struck by the solemn earnestness of the prisoner's manner, "and do you intend, Thomas, to persist in this plea of not guilty?"

"Your Lordship wadna hae me to tell a lie," replied Tam, with guileless simplicity.

"No, no—certainly not—certainly not, Twopenny," replied the Sheriff, forgetting, for the moment, that Tam was a prisoner, and calling him by the name most familiar both to himself and the latter. "Certainly not; but if you intend to plead not guilty, you must have counsel. Have you engaged one to plead your cause?"

No, my Lord," said Twopenny, apparently gathering confidence from the Sheriff's kind manner, "I hae nae means to pay counsel; but ye ken me, my Lord—hae kenned me for twenty years—ken my way o' leeving. I trust ye dinna believe it likely that I wad abstract siller frae a widow's letter; an', Oh! my Lord, gin ye wad gie me your advice how to act in this matter, ye wad be servin' the cause o' truth; for, as I shall answer to my Maker, I am innocent."

"Well, Thomas, I do sincerely hope so," said the Sheriff. "For, I assure you, it grieves me much to see one, of whom I had formed so high an opinion, brought here on such a charge. It is, however, my duty, in the meantime, to take the depositions of the witnesses who may be brought forward against you; but you may rely on having justice done you, and if a doubt arises, you shall have the benefit of it. I do trust you will be able to establish your innocence."

"Heaven will in its ain gude time," ejaculated Tam fervently.

The Sheriff nodded acquiescence in the sentiment; then turning to Blackwhiskers, he said, "Will you, Sir, bring forward your witnesses."

The latter, who looked rather crestfallen during this conference,

now rushed to the door, and instantly returned, leading in a middle-aged matron, in widows' garments, who seemed much flurried and agitated. The honest woman, who had never, during her life, been in presence of a judge before, stood for some time both motionless and speechless. She was invited to a seat, when the Sheriff took the most efficient means to restore her self-possession, by adverting to her loss, which had been the cause of their meeting.

"Ay, ye're honour," said the honest woman, "an' a heavy loss it is to me and mine. Ten pund, frae my ain laddie, wha's clerk wi' a merchant in Glasgow, and wha sends me that soum yearly. It's the feck o' the savings o' his hard won fee, and they canna expect to thrive either in this warld or in the next, wha has wranged us sae;" and here a tear stole down the poor woman's cheek. Her heart filled, and she was unable to proceed.

"And did you receive the letter from this man's hand?"

"Indeed did I, your honour," replied the widow, "frae that vera loun, wha's brought me mony siccan letters frae my laddie, and wha kenned weel enough what should hae been in't, I'll warrant ye; for the last ane he brought me I opened afore his een, let him see the siller, an' gae him a groat to himsell."

"Mark that, my Lord," said Blackwhiskers. The Sheriff made no reply, but looked doubtingly, and continued his examination.

"And, did the prisoner here, remain with you until you opened this letter also?"

"Na, na, your honour," replied the widow," he ran up the close as gin the deil were at his heels, and wadna stop, although I cried on him."

"What say you to this, Thomas?" inquired the Sheriff. Do you acknowledge this to be true?"

"True enough, I daresay," said Tam, without raising his head. "But I didna hear her crying me back, an' it was very dark, an' I hae aye a kind o' dread o' the lang, black entries at nights. They're no canny—queer sichts hae been seen in them."

"Come, come, Thomas," said the Sheriff, somewhat angrily, "be done with this foolery. You do not mean to say that you, an old man, believe in the nonsense of ghosts and witches, eh?"

"I do believe in them, my Lord," said Tam, now raising his head, and looking the Sheriff full in the face, "just as truly as that I see you, or that I ken I am a prisoner here. Oh!" he added in piteous tones, as he looked at the shackles on his wrist, "I wish I were free, an' hame to feed my puir birds again—they'll be starvin', the puir creatures."

"You have greater need to prepare for the gallows, you knave!" here exclaimed Blackwhiskers.

"Silence, Sir!" said the Sheriff; "the case must not be prejudged. Neither must I be interrupted in the discharge of my duty in this manner again, Sir. Go on," he continued to the widow, "go on with your story, mistress."

Thus enjoined, the woman proceeded to say, that the moment she discovered, from reading the letter, that ten pounds had been enclosed, she went to the Post-Office, and there saw the black-whiskered gentleman, who promised to make every inquiry into the matter. Several days had elapsed since the circumstance had occurred, and she had called at the office every day in the interval, but could learn nothing of her ten pounds. At length the gentleman informed her, that the prisoner had been apprehended, "and that," added the widow, "is a' I ken about it, your honour."

"And is this all you can tell us about this matter, honest woman?" inquired the Sheriff. "Cannot you tell us of what bank the notes were, and what were their numbers?"

"Aye, ye're honour," answered the widow; "here's a full description o' them in the letter that contained them. The notes belanged to the Glasgow Ship Bank, an' the numbers were, as you'll see marked there," and here she handed the Sheriff her son's letter.

"This is most important," said the Sheriff, "and shows your son to be a most correct and exemplary young man, my good woman. Did you observe whether the seal of the letter had been broken before you got it?"

"Indeed it was not, your honour," replied the widow. "The seal was quite hale, and had the twa letters o' my son's name stampit on't."

"This is, indeed, very strange," said the Sheriff. "How, then, could the money have been extracted?"

"I kenna, your honour," said the widow; "surely by some black art, for the letter hadna a wrinkle in't."

"My Lord," here interposed Blackwhiskers, "it is not uncommon for men who have been employed so long in Post-Office business as the prisoner, to have attained great dexterity in unfolding the ends of letters, and in this way abstracting the money which they contain. The plunderers in this way escape detection; the letters go on to their destination, and, from the number of offices they pass through, it is difficult to detect the guilty party."

Here Twopenny gave one of his accustomed whee-ee-ows, much to the astonishment of the Sheriff, and to the confusion of Blackwhiskers.

Holding up his huge horny hands, Tam coolly inquired at the Sheriff, "whether he thought thae claws, or the ringed, lily-white, tapered fingers o' Blackwhiskers, were likely to be most efficient in sic a process."

"This is most unbecoming language," said the Sheriff, with some apparent displeasure, and at the same time regarding Blackwhiskers with a look which seemed to indicate that he was not without similar suspicions.

"My Lord," interposed Blackwhiskers, "it is vain for the prisoner to deny the fact. I have a witness to produce, who will depone that he saw these identical notes in this man's possession."

"Let this witness, then, be brought forward instantly," said the Sheriff.

During this examination, Twopenny's manner exhibited a strange mixture of dejection and indifference. His eyes were now and then raised while the widow spoke, and, at these moments, tears were seen glistening in them. Anon he would turn a look upon Blackwhiskers, and then his purselled lips gave token of a wish to indulge in the favourite whee-ee-ow; but a glance at the Sheriff, or the shackles on his wrists, by inspiring a feeling of shame, restrained him,—and again would he relapse into a desponding attitude, apparently overcome by a sense of his own degradation and helplessness.

Blackwhiskers now left the room, and, in a few seconds, returned with our old friend Coal Jock, who, arrayed in his newest and smartest apparel, made his appearance in a way which excited the risible muscles of all present. In one hand he carried his broad-brimmed hat, and, with the other, smoothed down his coal-black hair over his small but acute forehead. He sidled into the room, first putting his right foot forward, then making a full pause, now advancing the left foot, and making another full pause—he then made another step forward, and came to a dead-halt, and so remained, until the Sheriff impatiently bade him come forward, when, making a desperate effort to muster all his courage, he hurried forward, with gigantic strides, to the front of the Sheriff's desk, his huge, heavy shoes, full of nails from nob to heel, leaving their impress on the old, deeply ridged, fir planks of the floor.

Now confronting the Sheriff, Coal Jock gazed at that terrible functionary with a vacant stare. Anon he stole a glance at the prisoner, and an ill-suppressed smile seemed struggling to form itself into a hearty laugh. Then he looked at Blackwhiskers, and a frown gathered on his brow, accompanied by an involuntary and ominous clenching of the fists. These expressions of varied feeling continued to manifest themselves, until the Sheriff asked him if he knew the prisoner.

It was some time before John could muster courage sufficient to enable him to answer this simple question. At length, however, he stammered out, in accents which evinced how much he was overcome on the present occasion—

"What's your worship's glory's wull, Sir?"

"I ask you," repeated the Sheriff, "whether you know the prisoner."

"I daursay I do, your worship's glory," replied Jock.

"Have you met with him frequently?" inquired the Sheriff.

"I'm thinkin' I hae, your worship's glory."

"You know his name and profession?"

"I ne'er speered what kirk he gaed to, your worship's glory," answered Jock. "I wadna think he fashed muckle wi' ony."

"That's not what I mean," explained the Sheriff. "I wish to know his name, and how he is employed—how he makes a living. Do you understand me?"

"Ou, aye, your worship's glory, I understand you weel aneugh," said Jock, "but wha understands Twopenny Tam the postman?"

"Twopenny Tam, the postman," repeated the Sheriff. I know that is the name he is commonly known by. But he must have another. Twopenny is but a nickname. What is your name, Sir?" he said, turning to Tam.

"I hae nae ither name, my Lord," answered Tam.

"Pooh, nonsense, man! you must have another name. Twopenny Tom is but a slang phrase," remarked the Sheriff.

"Really an' truly, my Lord," answered Twopenny, "gin e'er I had anither name I hae forgotten't, and so has every ither body."

"Well, well, it does not matter much in the meantime," said the Sheriff. Then addressing Jock, "Did you see any money in this person's possession yesterday?"

"Maybe I might, your worship's glory," replied Jock, with a peculiarly sly expression of countenance.

"Answer me distinctly, Sir," said the Sheriff. "Did you see this person in possession of any money yesterday?"

"I jalouse I did, your worship's glory," answered Jock, with great gravity.

"*Jalouse* you did?" repeated the Sheriff, as if but half satisfied, "and what might the sum be that you jalouse you saw?"

"There might, I daursay, be ten punds, your worship's glory," said Jock.

"The exact sum, my Lord," interposed Blackwhiskers. "The very amount taken from the poor widow's letter. Every one who knows

the circumstances of the prisoner, knows that he never could have come honestly by such a sum."

"Methinks Sir," said the Sheriff, "you are marvellously anxious to obtain a conviction against the prisoner. Were you in his place, you would, perhaps, be differently disposed. Already have I cautioned you against interrupting the examination of the witnesses; and I have now to state, that if you interrupt us again, I shall feel it my duty to order you out of the apartment. It is equally my duty to protect the innocent as to punish the guilty."

Here poor Twopenny gazed in the Sheriff's face with a most piteous look. He spoke not a word; but the tear that stole down his cheek, indicated, to the experienced eye of the Sheriff, how much the prisoner felt and appreciated his kindness.

"Where was the prisoner yesterday when you saw him have these notes in his possession?" resumed the Sheriff, addressing the witness.

"In his ain doocot, your worship's glory," said Jock.

"Doocot!" repeated the Sheriff, "what sort of a place is that, and where is it situated?"

"Atweel, your worship's glory," said Jock, "the garret he stays in is little else than a doocot, for its fou o' doos, and birds o' a sorts, and an unco wee place it is besides."

"O, yes, I understand," said the Sheriff. "And did the prisoner make any remarks to you about these notes? Did he say where he had got them?"

"In truth, your worship's glory," answered Jock, "gin ye maun hae't, ye shall hae't. I was ower glad to see them, to speer him ony questions anent how he cam by them."

"Indeed!" O, then, I suppose you expected to have a share in the spending of them, and therefore did not think it any business of yours to enquire how they were come by, eh? Was it not so?"

"Troth, your worship's glory," replied Jock, "I was sae glad to see an auld freend sae wealthy, an' sae dumbfoundered when he took the bonny braw new notes out o' his cupboard, an' flashed them in our een, that I really didna think o' askin' him ony thing about them."

"Our een!" exclaimed the Sheriff. "Do you mean to say that some one else saw them besides you and the prisoner?"

"I hae nae business, your worship's glory, wi' what ither folk saw," said Jock, as if he felt that he had been caught tripping. "I speak o' what I saw mysell."

"Well," rejoined the Sheriff, you stated that the prisoner flashed these notes in your eyes,—can you tell of what bank they were?"

"I'm sure I couldna answer your worship's glory that question,"

answered Jock. "Although I lookit at the water-marks, an' inspeckit them narrowly, to see that they were real notes."

"And yet," said the Sheriff emphatically, "you cannot say of what bank they were. Did you see the name of the bank on them?"

"Maybe I might hae seen it, an' yet no kenned it, your worship's glory," answered Jock; "for, like the lave o' my kind, I can neither read nor write."

"Indeed, then, poor fellow, you are to be pitied," said the good Sheriff, in a tone of commiseration. "But were there no particular marks about these notes, by which you could describe them? Were there no figures or impressions on them that attracted your attention?"

"Ay, troth were there, your worship's glory," said Jock—suddenly throwing himself into the attitude, and imitating the movements of a seaman. "There was a three-masted ship in full sail at the ae corner, an' there were twa men nifferin' bags and boxes at the ither."

"The identical notes!" exclaimed Blackwhiskers. "The very figures engraved on the notes of the Glasgow Ship Bank. It is clear, my Lord, that this must have been the money the widow's son sent to his mother; so says the letter, you know."

"Must I again caution you to be silent, Sir," said the Sheriff indignantly. "Have I not the widow's letter here, and cannot I read it without your assistance? These interruptions, Sir, I repeat, cannot be tolerated."

"I beg pardon, my Lord," said Blackwhiskers, "but my anxiety to see justice done on this miscreant, makes me forget myself. I shall not again interfere."

"I beg you may not, Sir," replied the Sheriff, not a little ruffled. Then, turning to Jock, he resumed his examination. "Can you tell me, my good fellow," he said, "any thing about what became of these notes?"

"I'm no sae sure gin I can aswer that question, your worship's glory, without asking the prisoner's leave," replied Jock, looking hard at Twopenny.

"Be so good as answer me ay or no," said the Sheriff.

"Aweel, aweel, your worship's glory," said Jock, "gin ye insist on't, I may as weel do't at ance, I reckon, eh, Twopenny?" he concluded, appealing to the prisoner. But Twopenny was apparently so much cast down, and disgusted at the breach of confidence committed by his quondam friend in the disclosures he was now making, that he would not deign to answer him.

"Come, come, Sir," said the Sheriff, "do, like a good fellow, tell

us at once what became of these notes Did you not help the prisoner to squander them ?—such a sum of money was surely too much to have spent already in dissipation."

" Hoot, awa, your worship's glory," said Jock, with a smile, " ae pund-note wad hae keepit me fou for a week ; an' gin I had gotten ane o' them, ye wadna hae had me here sober at this time o' day."

" Then," said the Sheriff impatiently, " What did become of these notes? Did the prisoner give them away, or has he hoarded them up? If the latter be the case, we must try to find them."

" Atweel, your worship's glory," said Jock, " I'm thinkin' that'll no be very easy ; for Tam gae them awa afore my een to ane wha winna gie him them back again in a hurry, I'll warrant ye."

" Ay, ay," exclaimed the Sheriff, " the truth begins to peep out now. Some female friend, no doubt—some squalid wretch with whom the prisoner cohabits, has the money ?"

" Troth no, your worship's glory," said Jock. " Gin ye maun hae't, nae woman e'er put a finger on't, but a jolly fellow, muckle aneugh and strong aneugh to fell a' here, the ane after the ither."

" Worse and worse !" exclaimed the Sheriff. " Some brazen, browbeating bully, who has promised to break into the jail and set the prisoner free, no doubt. Let us have his name and residence, that we may apprehend him, and search his person and premises for the money."

" Atweel, your worship's glory," said Jock, " your red-neckit servants wad be strangers in his neighbourhood, an' wadna easily tak him. Besides, I darena tell ye his name. It's mair than my life's worth."

" Pooh," said the Sheriff, " the law will protect you, man. Speak out openly and fearlessly—you have nothing to dread."

" Your worship's glory," said Jock, in a half whisper, as he stretched his neck across the bench towards the Sheriff, " gin ye would honour me wi' half a minute's confab in your private chaumer, I might tell ye. I daurna do't here."

" Step this way, then," said the Sheriff, opening the door of the closet, or consulting chamber, into which he was followed by Coal Jock,—leaving Twopenny Tam, Blackwhiskers, and the subordinate officers who were present, to await the Sheriff's return.

CHAPTER XIX.

When your friend's back's at the wa',
Rise ye wi' the morning's daw ;
Gin ye gaur his heart loup light,
Saftly will ye sleep gin night.
Old Song.

From an early hour that morning, our friends, Mark Sprot and Mathew Waldie, might have been seen pacing the street opposite the head of the narrow alley in which at that time the Sheriff-clerk's office was situated. Mr Forrester, as the reader will recollect, had promised to meet these kind-hearted men, previous to his attending Lauder's judicial examination, and this was the spot at which the meeting was appointed to take place. The manner in which Forrester had, on the previous evening, received them at Thorniedell—the interest evinced by him in the cause of truth and virtue—the prompt energy with which he had resolved to assist Philip Lauder, and expose the Cauldwells, provided the innocence of the former, and the double-dealing of the latter, were established, all tended to convince Sprot and Waldie, that Forrester was to be the sheet-anchor of Lauder's fortune; and they, worthy souls, naturally felt proud that they had been the means of securing the services of so powerful a friend. They had been very early astir. Waldie had breakfasted with Sprot before daybreak. Mrs Sprot made herself amazingly busy on this, to her, glorious occasion; and Sprot the younger, whom neither menaces nor promises could keep in bed after his father, at the suggestion of his little mother, recited his father's newest poem, for the behoof and edification of Waldie.

DESPONDENCY AND CHEERFULNESS.

"My wee bit helpless callant! O that look I canna bear!
Ye are seeking for a smile, an' I gie ye but a tear;
For oh! your daddie's heart wi' grief is unco sair oppressed,
While ye are lying faulded to your minnie's beating breast."

"Come, come, cheer up my Johnnie, man, an' tak ye heart frae me,
I'll keep awa the saut, saut tear that bleer's your kindly ee;
We're puir short-sighted mortals, sae let's aye hope for the best.
An' bury a' your cares an' fears within your wifie's breast."

" In vain ye strive to cheer my heart, my kind an' gentle dame,
When poortith's dark and dreary cluds thus gather round our hame ;
I canna get a stroke o' wark—O sair, sair is the test !
An' whiles, God help me, curses deep, rise swelling in my breast."

" Hoot toot, awa my Johnnie man, why wad ye fret an' mourn,
Although the times are hard e'ennow, they soon may tak a turn ;
Be thankfu' for the blessings past, Heaven still will mak us blest,—
E'en now, I feel hope's morning-star, awaken in my breast."

And hark a round, full manly voice, shouts through the cottage-door,
" Hallo ! Jock, lad, the laird's come hame—there's wark for years in store ;"
The father started till his feet, an' wife an' wean carest,—
He felt that Heaven had a hame within his wifie's breast.

On their way to Edinburgh, the friends had indulged in many pleasing anticipations. They had chuckled and laughed, and exchanged gratulations a thousand times on the road ; and even after they had reached the spot where Forrester had appointed to meet them, their extravagant gesticulations and loud peals of laughter had repeatedly attracted the attention of passers by.

As the hour of meeting approached, the friends became more and more excited, and began hurrying up and down now hither, now thither, peering in every direction for Mr Forrester—but no Mr Forrester appeared. The hour passed away—their confidence and glee departed, and their faces began to stretch out into a most dismal elongation. Lauder's creditors passed them ; the Sheriff passed them. The miller and Philip also, after spending a few moments in conversation with them, passed into the Sheriff-clerk's office. Coal Jock, who seemed anxious to avoid them, was seen descending the same alley in company with Blackwhiskers. They hoisted a signal to the former, which he refused to acknowledge, and this seemed to dishearten the poor fellows altogether.

" What can hae come o' him ?" exclaimed Waldie, after waiting another five minutes. " Mair smoke than fire, I doubt. See gin night!"

" I couldna hae thocht it o' him," said Sprot. " I'm sure yon grey ee o' his is as gleg as a wummle. He doesna seem either lame or lazy, an' he appeared to be fairly enlisted in the gude cause. Martha, too, wad surely do her best to gaur him keep his promise ; she's an angel, an' lo'es Philip dearly. Even for her sake, I wadna for a thousand ells o' braid claith that ony ill cam ower the poor fellow,—it wad break the dear lassie's heart, Waldie."

"Ah!" ejaculated Waldie; "see't a', see't a'. Cauldwell been at him wi' his whillywhaain' lees; screwed his nose at us as he gaed down the close there. Has casten glamour in the auld man's een."

"I wish we had him here," said Sprot; "may I ne'er pit in another steek, if I wadna pierce the auld loon's heart, an' gaur him toll doun twa three o' his mouly bawbees to help poor Philip."

"Auld skinflint, after a', I doubt!" exclaimed Waldie. "Like a' the lave o' the siller gatherers. Yet he has been through the fire himsell, an' should be saftened a bit. Wonder Martha doesna come hersell; she wad never cheat us. Maybe come yet—see gin night."

Alas, alas! the delay of Mr Forrester was not occasioned by any such motives as those hinted at by these honest, warm-hearted friends of humanity. We are all children of a day, and so completely is our fate concealed from us, that we know not what an hour may bring forth. The grim spectre Death is continually laying wait for us; yea, even in our highways and byeways, as well as in our chambers, and every day maketh he another breach in the circle of our friends, until we ourselves at length disappear, and the place that knew us knows us no more.

Death hovered over the dwelling of Mr Forrester, who had found a parent only to lose her until they should again meet in another and a better world;—poor old Maillie was dying.

The joy occasioned by the sudden recognition of her son had been too much for the exhausted nature of the poor old woman; and she, who had patiently endured, without murmuring, a long series of sufferings, was now sinking under a violent and sudden emotion of joy.

Dark night had spread her gloomy mantle over the sky, and the party at Thorniedell remained engaged as we left them. Maillie still slumbered; but her increased heaviness of breathing, and continued moaning, grieved and perplexed those around her. She often started in her sleep, and seemed struggling to give utterance to some feeling that seemed to oppress her. Ever and anon an indistinct murmur hovered on her lips, which eventually died away without becoming more distinct.

Martha seated herself beside the couch of the sufferer, and on either side of it stood, with countenances expressive of deep sympathy and sorrow, Mr and Mrs Forrester. At the conclusion of a long drawn sigh, Maillie opened her eyes, and gazed on the countenances of those around her, as if endeavouring to recollect who they were. The gentle voice of Martha, however, quickly restored her to consciousness, and to a knowledge of the beloved friends who surrounded her.

"My dear Martha!" she exclaimed, in very distinct but feeble tones,

"my excellent friend Mrs Forrester, and my long lost and much beloved son, I feel that we are not destined to enjoy each other's society long here. You, my son, have, at a very late period of life, met with a parent, and heaven has decreed that we should now separate. My end is approaching. I have lived to see this blessed day, and I die contented and happy, in the prospect of meeting you all again, when we shall, I trust, enjoy an eternity of glory."

"Oh, say not so, say not so!" exclaimed Forrester. "You must not—you shall not leave me so soon. Heaven will listen to my prayer and restore you to health, to bless me with your benediction, and aid me with your counsel. He who has preserved you through so many years of suffering and of sorrow, will spare you yet a little longer to enjoy the new sources of happiness that have been opened up to you and to us all. God help me, old as I am, and much of the world as I have seen, I feel as if I were a child in your presence. I feel that I have much yet to learn, much to endure, ere I can be said to have acquired true wisdom. Surely, surely heaven will not be so cruel as deprive me of you already."

"Forbear, my son, this irreverent language," said Maillie. "All our days are numbered, and not a sparrow falls to the ground without the permission of our Heavenly Father. I have lived long enough—fourscore years have I sojourned on the earth: many of these years have been spent in poverty, in sorrow, in suffering. Bright visions of hope, however, enlightened the darkness of my misery, and now these visions have resolved themselves into a blessed reality. I have been permitted to see the child of my youth, the image of my beloved husband, after a long absence, return to his native country in affluence and in safety; and, oh! with what rapture do I perceive that those lessons of charity which it was ever my delight to instill into your young mind, have not been taught in vain—that they have taken root in a good soil, and are bringing forth fruit abundantly. Is it not, think ye, something of which a parent, even on the brink of the grave, may boast, that the son of her love returns to her, after a long separation, imbued with principles based on that love of truth and virtue which she had endeavoured to implant in his mind in early years. My son, you are indeed the pride and glory of my heart—you have the power and will to return kindness for kindness—you are not ashamed to acknowledge the obligations you owe to the family who reared you as their own—you have adopted the widow and daughter of your deceased foster-brother—and you have your reward. A sweeter, a diviner being, was never created than that angel who now looks on me, with eyes such as shall greet my entrance into heaven. I have committed to her

keeping a secret of some consequence to you ; she will divulge it to you after I am no more. And now, I feel that I require the short time left me for silent and solitary meditation, so that I may attain that frame of mind in which it is becoming that the creature should be prepared to meet the Creator, whom I pray to bless you, now and for ever. Amen."

This was spoken in broken sentences and with deep feeling, but with a calmness which had the effect of soothing the agitation of the listeners. Forrester sunk overcome on a chair, and a tear started to his eye. Martha, too, wept plenteously, and the grief of her young heart found relief in the flood of tears which coursed down her lovely cheeks. But Widow Forrester stood apparently unmoved—she shed no tear—she heaved no sigh. Grief had been her familiar companion so long—she had witnessed so many scenes of death and desolation, that the fountain of her heart had been dried up, and she had no tears to shed. The widow's cap she wore was the symbol of an abiding, deep-rooted sorrow, which never would altogether depart from her till death should set her weary spirit free ; and she stood gazing at her ancient dying friend, as if half envying her that end which her experienced eye told her was rapidly approaching.

All night long the watchers watched, and the sufferer waxed weaker and weaker. Forrester, who had often faced death on the battle-field without dismay, seemed altogether overcome by this deathbed scene. Silent and motionless the dying woman lay. The watchers held their breath, and the heavy respirations, and the low moaning of the sufferer, were the only sounds that disturbed the solemn silence of what might be already called the chamber of death. Once, indeed, Maillie's eyes were turned to those around her—once her lips were observed to move tremulously, as if she would have spoken. They raised her head gently, and moistened her parched lips ; but after muttering a few inarticulate words, she sunk into her former state of silent abstraction. Morning dawned ;—the beams of early day made their way into the chamber, and the sufferer still continued to breathe heavily, the watchers to administer every little comfort which they thought could in any way contribute to smooth her passage to the grave.

Forrester perfectly recollected his appointment with Waldie and Sprot, but could not leave the bed-side of his venerable parent at the moment her spirit was about to take its departure. The only person he could have dispatched with a message was a wretched driver of a sorry hackney-coach, whom Waldie and Sprot had that morning sent out to convey their friend to town. But any message he could have sent by such a messenger would have been of little use, and the con-

veyance might be instantly required. Martha also felt extremely anxious about poor Philip, but could not, in the circumstances in which she was placed, do aught but wait the arrival of that event which was evidently every moment approaching nearer. The image of Philip Lauder, however, was even then present to her mind—she saw him writhing under the accusation of a fraudulent bankruptcy. Her blood run coldly through her veins, as she thought on the hypocrisy and meanness of John Cauldwell; and she felt pleased that the villany of Maillie's favourite had not reached her ear, to disturb her in her last moments.

The hour of noon had just been struck by the antique clock that stood in the adjoining room, when Maillie, having gazed wistfully for a second or two into the faces of those around her, stretched forth her little shrivelled hand towards them. Martha pressed it to her bosom, raised it to her lips, and kissed it reverently and affectionately, a tear dropping on it, at the same moment, from the suffused eyes of the tender-hearted girl. Forrester also affectionately kissed that little, very little hand, but was so overcome by his feelings that he had to leave the apartment. The dying woman feebly returned the pressure of the widow's hand—she retained it in her grasp—her eyes were fixed stedfastly on the widow's face—her lips moved, as if invoking a blessing—a faint smile overspread her countenance—her eyes continued fixed. She retained the hand of Mrs Forrester, but the glance and the grasp were those of death. Life's pulse had ceased to beat, and poor, devoted, patient, and suffering Maillie was at rest for ever.

After a few minutes, spent in condoling with each other on the striking event which had just taken place, Mrs Forrester called in the gardener's wife, to assist in performing the last duties to the deceased; and Forrester, whose energy of character every new trial but made the more manifest, resolved on setting off instantly to Edinburgh, to fulfil his promise to Waldie and Sprot. He requested Martha to accompany him, a request with which she at once complied, preparing herself for the journey with astonishing celerity; and in a very few minutes, she and Mr Forrester were seated in the carriage, and on their way to the city. Martha now proceeded to reveal to Mr Forrester the secret with which Maillie had entrusted her, and recapitulated to him the whole of his mother's personal narrative.

Mr Forrester evinced deep emotion as the speaker proceeded, and Martha imagined that she discovered an expression of disappointment, when she stated to him the nature of his relationship to the Cauldwell family. But when she had described the manner in which John Cauldwell had intruded himself upon the privacy of Maillie and her-

self, and had concluded her story, by mentioning that he had snatched from the hands of Forrester's venerable parent the certificate of her honour and the legitimacy of her son, the brow of that son became dark, his eyes flashed fire, and, for the first time, Martha beheld him in a towering passion. "Infamous scoundrel!" he exclaimed, as he drew down the carriage window, and called to the driver, who was driving leisurely along, "Come, sirrah, drive; put your horses to their speed—quick, quick, and you shall have a crown for your pains.—Infamous villain!" he muttered to himself, apparently forgetful of the gentle and somewhat affrighted girl who sat beside him. "Base, low swindler, you have carried away these papers for the purpose of destroying my just claim to the estate of Dean; but you shall not escape me. My dear Martha," he added in a gentle tone, "forgive me; I have been rude, very rude; but you know the wretch who has provoked my anger better than I do. I am truly happy you have escaped him. Yet my poor mother loved him; but his hypocrisy deceived her, as it has done me. I shall never again give myself credit for perception of character.

The carriage now entered the city—passed on through the ancient port of Bristo—descended the street called the Candlemaker Row—and reached the foot of the West Bow. Forrester, too impatient to wait till the worn-out hack-horses had dragged the lumbering vehicle up the steep ascent, stepped out, followed by Martha, and having satisfied the driver, gave the fair girl his arm, and they proceeded together towards the Sheriff-clerk's office.

Who shall describe the joy, the rapturous delight of Waldie and Sprot, when they saw Forrester and Martha hastening towards them! They could scarcely believe their eyes. They had waited and waited—they had gone away and returned repeatedly—they had visited Luckie Birlie's stable-yard to ascertain whether or not the carriage had come back, and on being answered in the negative, had again returned to their post. The day was rather damp, at least Waldie said so; and they had descended several times into some of the spirit vaults which were then so plenteous in that locality. They were, therefore, a little—just a very little—touched, when the Forresters made their appearance; and they set up a shout that awakened the slumbering echoes of the high houses, and alarmed all the people on the streets, who looked upon them as if they doubted their sanity.

"Come awa, man, come awa, man!" said Waldie, apparently forgetting the difference of their position, and seizing Forrester by both hands. "Eh, you've been lang o' comin'! Come at last, though. Steel to the bane, eh, Mark? Hurrah, lad, come awa!—see gin night;" and

away he bundled Forrester into the low-browed entry that led to the Sheriff-clerk's office, leaving Mark to bring up the rear with Martha Forrester.

It happened that at this moment Coal Jock was closeted with the Sheriff, to whom he had been revealing sundry important secrets, relative to the money for which poor Twopenny had been apprehended. On a lady and gentleman being announced as wishing some private conversation with the Sheriff, the worthy official directed the ci-devant knight of the black diamonds to return to the room from whence they had come, and where poor Twopenny still remained. He also gave Jock, and the officers in attendance, instructions to keep a sharp eye on a certain party—of whom more anon; and having thus cleared his private consulting-room for the reception of the strangers, Mr Forrester and his fair charge were instantly admitted. The honest man apologised for the inconvenient smallness of the apartment, and stated, by way of an excuse, that both his other rooms were occupied by two different parties. Forrester now made the Sheriff acquainted with as much of his personal history as he judged necessary for his present purpose. He had come here, he said, to assist the young man, Philip Lauder, who, he had every reason to believe, was a person of excellent character, but who had fallen into bad hands. The Sheriff shook Forrester warmly by the hand, and said that he was extremely happy to see assistance come in any shape to the poor lad, who seemed to stand much in need of such a friend.

Forrester, then, after ascertaining who were present at the meeting of Lauder's creditors, and that Jack Cauldwell was one of them, stated to the Sheriff the charge he meant to prefer against that individual, namely, that of having purloined a valuable and important document. The Sheriff, on learning the particulars of the case, agreed with Forrester in thinking that Cauldwell had taken away that certificate for the purpose of setting aside Forrester's claim. Then the death of Maillie was peculiarly unfortunate, as Martha was the only surviving witness, and the evidence of one person alone was not sufficient to establish any fact in law. It was, therefore, determined that, in the meantime, Forrester and Martha should remain where they were. The little closet, as formerly described, was only separated by a slight partition from the room wherein the creditors were met, and Mr and Miss Forrester could hear distinctly all that was said in the adjoining apartment. The Sheriff, therefore, left them, and proceeded to join Philip Lauder and his creditors.

CHAPTER XX.

> The Lord will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.
>
> *Proverbs* xv. 25.

When Philip Lauder left the room where his creditors were assembled, he proceeded direct to the jail, from whence he speedily returned, followed by old Dippie Dinwoodie. Philip had, in some way or other, been furnished with the credentials requisite for Dinwoodie's temporary liberation, and some unknown friend had provided the old man with decent clothing for the occasion. The veteran's appearance was still further improved by clean linens, a newly shaven beard, and a highly coloured face, which had evidently undergone a copious ablution. He appeared to be elevated in spirits, by the transformation effected on his outer man, and he entered the Sheriff-clerk's Office with a firm step, and an air of the most sturdy independence.

There was one person on whose countenance a marked change was visible at this moment—that person was old Cauldwell. He evidently felt the difficulty of the position in which he was placed, and could not conceive how, in his anxiety to bring Philip into disgrace, he had come to forget Dinwoodie, and the danger there was of Philip and he meeting. The old miser, however, was not easily conquered. He calculated the chances for and against him with amazing rapidity—he imagined that little importance would be attached to any thing Dinwoodie could say—and having fixed on his course of procedure, he leant back in his seat, and fixed his keen, grey, twinkling eye upon his old tenant, while an expression of malevolence and hate was visible in every feature of his withered face.

When Dinwoodie first caught Cauldwell's eye thus fixed upon him, he seemed to feel considerable trepidation; but the jolly miller perceiving him to be uneasy, stepped up to him, took him by the hand, inquired after his health, and, by this kind proceeding, restored him to his self-possession. The wood-merchant, too, who knew the old man well, and had heard of his imprisonment, cordially shook him by the hand—said he was happy to see him at large again—and asked why, and for what, he had been so long in jail.

"Ask my auld landlord there," answered Dinwoodie, "he'll tell ye. He has been very good to me. I hae been living at hack-an'-manger at his expense this lang time, ye ken."

"Mr Chairman, an' gentlemen!" exclaimed Cauldwell, appealing to those around him with great earnestness, "is this not as I anticipated, and warned you anent? Is this not trifling with our precious time, to bring here a miserable, drunken old man as a witness, eh? One who has squandered all his means, and whom I was forced to proceed to extreme measures with—to sell off, in fact, for my own safety. One whom, in consequence of the threats and menaces he uttered against me in his drunken moods, I was obliged to have locked up in jail, where I have kept him comfortable at a heavy expense. Who has brought him here? Who stands security for my life, and for the safe custody of my prisoner, eh?"

"I stand security for the safe custody of your prisoner!" exclaimed the miller, turning to Cauldwell, with an expression of great indignation in his manner; "but as for your life, ye maun look after that yoursell, for it is of nae use to ony body else. Shame on ye, man!—shame to hae keepit a puir, auld worn-out creature like that confined in a jail, till he's reested an' reekit like a rizzard haddy. Puir, auld, harmless, feckless Dinwoodie wadna harm a flee, let alane a human being; but for the sake o' truth—for the sake o' justice—he is brought here now; and gin a' your transactions be honest and honourable, ye hae naething to fear frae him, nor ony body else."

"Oh! I perceive!" exclaimed Cauldwell, affecting a gay, ironical tone. "This is, I suppose, the eminent engineer and surveyor, who is to prove that the prices at which Lauder and Hastie took the work was insufficient to remunerate them, eh? Precious surveyor—old, broken down cartwright, eh?"

"Hoot, toot, laird, ye maunna lightlie me ower muckle," said Dinwoodie, stroking his chin with his finger and thumb, and casting a sly glance around him. "Ye canna hae forgotten that I used to draw out a' your plans, laird, when ye had ony improvements gaun on? Ye must mind the boozes o' toddy we used to hae thegither ower them in your ain snuggery? By the bye, that was a' the payment e'er ye gae me—I hope ye're gaun to come down handsome noo."

"Ay, and keep you in jail till you rot, Sir," said Cauldwell. "Can you believe, gentlemen, that I would make a companion of such a man as this, eh? Shameful liar, you shall suffer for this yet. All liars should, eh?"

"Come, come, laird," said Dinwoodie, smiling, "ye maunna let your anger carry ye ower far. Ye surely dinna mean to deny that I

was Lauder an' Hastie's rival contractor—that I gae ye in the ither estimate—and that ye were paying the young men wi' the prices that ye gaured me put down? Ye maunna be sae oblivious o' auld friends, man."

Here was a poser to old Cauldwell—a statement which made the blood mount to the face of every one present, excepting that of this mild and much injured individual. The old laird, however, was not to be caught. Resuming his usual cool, deliberate, and sarcastic manner, he exclaimed, "A very pretty story indeed, Master Dinwoodie! Gentlemen," he continued to those around him, "you cannot believe such a statement? The fact is, I had long suspected that this old man was insane—knew he had drank away his senses—chief reason why I committed him to prison—thought confinement might improve him—some times that effect, eh? Thought him better, and took him out one day to ascertain what effect kindness might have upon him—found him unsafe, and sent him back to jail—cheaper and better than a madhouse, eh? When I had him out, we walked to Colinton together—had to meet a person there, to show plans for estimating building Crooknook Mill. Dinwoodie insisted on giving me an estimate also. Afraid to excite him, I pretended to receive it. Under pretext that his charges were too high, I attempted to get quit of him; but he sent me in another, and insisted so peremptorily on my giving him the work to execute, that I was afraid he might commit some violent act, and again sent him to jail. But you cannot suppose that I could have offered Lauder and Hastie such terms as this old fool mentioned? No, I paid them, as I formerly stated to you, the same rates that a most respectable party offered to execute the work for."

"'Od, it strikes me, Mr Cauldwell," interrupted the honest quarryman, "there could be little harm in letting us see that ither estimate—it wad be so far satisfactory."

"The deil a ane he can show ye but mine," said Dinwoodie, winking his left eye very significantly; "an' mair than that, the plans are a' my makin' out; an' I'll take ye a bet, that the writin' on the very plans that Lauder an' Hastie hae been workin' frae, was scribbled by me; and gin Philip here doesna say it's the same, I'll eat my hat. Lauder, speak out, lad," he continued, seizing a pen which lay on the table, and writing his name on a piece of paper, "gin that's no the same handwrite that's on the estimate, the specifications an' plans that you signed, I'm no Dippie Dinwoodie. By my faith, you chields are unco short in the sight, gin ye dinna see through auld Cauldwell there."

At this moment the Sheriff entered the room from the adjoining

chamber or closet, in which he had just left Mr and Miss Forrester; and young Jack Cauldwell, who had hitherto taken no share in the discussion, now stepped up to the Sheriff, and inquired if it was consistent with decency, that a wretch like this should be brought from jail, for the purpose of attempting to asperse the fair fame of such a man as his esteemed uncle.

"Indeed," said the Sheriff, "this is a matter for the creditors to consider; but I may state, that I have overheard a considerable part of the conversation, and my impression is, that Mr Cauldwell should at once set this assertion aside, by producing, as I have no doubt he can, the estimate and name of the rival contractor."

"My Lord," interrupted Lawyer Cauldwell, in a dry, measured, and sententious manner, "you are aware that, in the eye of the law, the whole matter amounts to this, that these young men, with their eyes open, contracted to perform certain work for a certain price, and that they must stand by the consequences. My brother has stated that another party offered to execute this work on similar terms. My brother's character is above suspicion, and he shall never, with my consent, demean himself by condescending to adduce any other evidence than that which he has already given, namely, the avowal of a gentleman."

"Gentleman!" exclaimed Dinwoodie, "was it like a gentleman to roup me out o' house an' hald, because I couldna pay him his rent, after a' my time had been ta'en up wi' workin' for him, and runnin' after him at a' hours to do his orra jobs, without getting a bawbee for my trouble? Was it like a gentleman to get up a lang account against me, an' clap me into jail, because I happened to curse his cruelty, and prophecy his downfa'."

"Hoot, toot," interrupted the honest quarryman, "haud yere tongue, Dippie, ye're makin' things waur, man. Come, come, Mr Cauldwell, ye maunna be ower hard on the young men. Like a' new beginners, nae doubt, they were anxious to get employment, and may hae ta'en the wark below a paying price. No haein' ony capital, of course the burden of this fa's on us, their creditors; an' do ye no think it a wee hard that we should suffer, and that you a wealthy man should profit at our expense? 'Od, Mr Cauldwell, let's hae the wark inspected by a competent person, and gin he says that the contractors haena been paid for what they hae done at a fair rate, mak up the difference, and pay it to the creditors."

"What! eh?" exclaimed Cauldwell, forgetting his assumed character, and appearing in the undisguised garb of meanness and selfishness, "What! give up advantage of contract? Divide my lawful gains among

a parcel of ninnies, to save a fool from prison, eh? Not so fast—not so fast—wont do, brother, eh? Jack, eh? Let him starve first—let him hang first, eh?" And with that the old man ground his teeth, and clenched his fist, and, turning round to Philip, grinned in his face, and broke out into a sardonic chuckle.

But this chuckle was almost instantly checked by a scream from the adjoining apartment. The door opened, and in rushed the elegant form of Martha, followed by the tall, thin, but commanding figure of Mr Forrester.

"What means this, Philip? What means this?" Martha exclaimed. "They surely will not drag you again to prison? If they do, they shall drag me along with you. Is this, Sir," she said, addressing Jack Cauldwell, who had involuntarily sprung forward on seeing her enter the room, "is this, Sir, your professed friendship—your disinterested kindness? I know you now, and despise you. You are lost to every sense of honour."

"My dearest Miss Forrester!" exclaimed Jack, "do not judge me so hastily. Stay, I entreat you, until you hear my explanation. I endeavoured to save Lauder from this disgrace—I laboured to induce my uncle to interfere in his behalf—and, I believe, might have been successful, but for the indecent interference of some of Mr Lauder's friends, who seem anxious to throw the whole blame on one who is as exalted above them in principle as he is in station. Under these circumstances, I could not prevail on my relative, exasperated as he was by such offensive insinuations, to interfere in the matter, and I came here, still anxious to preserve inviolate my promise of yesterday, and to turn the tide in Lauder's favour."

"Very strange," exclaimed the jolly timber-merchant, "that this should have been the first indication you have given of such a disposition."

"Pardon me, my dear Sir!" said Jack, "I was placed in an awkward predicament, and therefore refrained from expressing what I felt. Mr Lauder may thank his friends for my non-interference. I certainly should and would have used all my influence in his favour, had not those vile insinuations been thrown out against my dear, kind, and good uncle."

"I have no doubt whatever, Sir," said Forrester, now speaking for the first time, "that the most perfect harmony subsists between you and your amiable uncle; and I am delighted to learn that you and he are always bestirring yourselves in the cause of truth and virtue—a sort of knights-errant, in a way, I presume. Pray, Sir, might I request you to return to me the papers which you have in your posses-

sion belonging to me, and which, I believe, were committed by my worthy parent to your safe keeping."

"What papers! my dear Sir?" exclaimed Jack, with an air of mingled amazement and perplexity. "I am not aware that I hold any papers of yours in my possession."

"The papers, I mean, Sir," said Forrester, "which prove my right and title to the house and lands of Dean? It is high time the property was out of the hands of this rapacious old miser."

"Eh? what?" exclaimed Cauldwell. "Don't mean to rob me of an estate which has descended to me from a long line of ancestors, eh? Law has not left the land, eh? Must not attempt robbery, eh?"

"There is no robbery in a man taking possession of that which by right belongs to him. Know that I am the son of your elder brother, Sir. Boy, produce that marriage-certificate, which, in the presence of this young lady, you got into your possession yesterday."

"My dear Sir," said Jack, gravely, "there must be some mistake here. No such document ever came into my possession. You must be labouring under some delusion. I was not aware until this moment that you were in any way connected with our family."

Martha Forrester herself, an impersonation of truth, was so astonished and so shocked at this declaration, that, for some moments, she stood silent and motionless. Suddenly, however, she seemed to have gained new strength, and while she fixed her gaze steadily on Jack Cauldwell, thus addressed him,—

"You must be conscious, at this moment, Sir, of the truth of my statement, that yesterday, out at Thorniedell, immediately after Mrs Mathison had rehearsed to me her very singular and eventful history, and when she was about to commit to my charge the document in question—a document which proved her marriage with the elder brother of your father and your uncle, and which, consequently, proves that gentleman," pointing to Mr Forrester, "lawful heir to the estate of Dean—you surely do not mean to deny, that, at this moment you came forward from a side-door in the apartment, and took the paper from the worthy old woman. She reposed implicit confidence in you, and was delighted that the important document, which she had kept so carefully, was in such safe-keeping. She has now gone from amongst us, and in her name, I call upon you to deliver up that certificate to its proper owner."

"My dear Miss Forrester," said Jack, "you must, I repeat, have been under some hallucination. I am truly sorry my kind old friend Maillie is gone—she could have corroborated the truth of that which I now assert. I really, now, must suppose that you have been dream-

ing, my dear Miss Forrester, and that your dream has taken such hold of your imagination, that you begin to fancy it reality—by no means an uncommon case, believe me," he concluded with a smile, which was meant to be very winning.

But all this appeared reality to more than Martha Forrester. From the moment that the circumstance of Mr Forrester's connexion with the Cauldwells had been mentioned, all eyes had been turned towards that gentleman, and all admitted that his features, although of a more elevated cast, bore a strong resemblance to the Cauldwell family. Honest Halbert Flemyng appeared more than ordinarily excited. He looked again and again at Forrester—struck his staff vigorously on the ground—and at last stepping forward, seized him by the hand, and exclaimed,—

"By the memories o' my ain honest faither and mither, I believe every word o' what Martha has said to be as true as death Maillie Mathieson was incapable o' telling a lee; an' the likeness atween you and the auld Laird o' Deanhouse is most striking. I mind o' the auld man weel, when I was a callant, an' an honest, generous laird he was. Come, Sir," said the sturdy miller, now addressing Jack, "gie up this document, or ye had better been torn to tatters by the teeth o' my water-wheel—ye'll come to a waur ending. I gie ye warning."

"My Lord," interposed old Deanhouse, "I humbly submit, whether it is quite fair that you should allow such insolent menaces to pass unnoticed. If this rude, noisy fellow repeats such a sentiment, I shall advise my nephew to call in the law to his assistance."

"Heed him not! heed him not, brother!" said Lawyer Cauldwell. "His violence on this occasion is of a piece with what I and my family have been subjected to by him, and his friends the Forresters, at a former period. Even this young woman, who, it appears, is elevated into a young lady of rank and fortune, by one who seeks further to elevate himself at the expense of our family—even this young lady—after having been taken into my house through a pure feeling of charity, abused the confidence reposed in her, and attempted to bring disgrace upon us, on whose bounty she was dependant, by inveigling an only son and heir into a mean and beggarly alliance."

This was not the first time that such a charge had been brought against Martha. The reader will recollect, on the occasion of the Misses Cauldwell's visit to Widow Forrester in the Canongate, that these young ladies had, in presence of Lauder and others, expressed similar sentiments. Poor Martha, however, was so overcome by the cold, measured manner in which Lawyer Cauldwell spoke, as well as by what he said, that she sank back into a chair, and covering her face

with her hands, burst into tears. This at once roused Philip Lauder's indignation, and, in the full pride of conscious integrity, he stood forth, exclaiming, as he turned to the cold-blooded lawyer,—

"You lie, Sir! Your son made a violent and shameless attack on this young lady in the open street! I had the honour of chastizing him then, and would again, did he dare to repeat the experiment. But he is a craven-hearted scoundrel, and is altogether unworthy of Miss Forrester, who is as far above you and yours as heaven is above earth."

"By my faith, lad!" exclaimed the miller, giving Philip a friendly slap on the shoulder, "and that was manfully spoken, an' proves ye to be as far aboon your rival as honesty is aboon villany. My Lord," he continued, addressing the Sheriff, "I am convinced that this coward-loon," pointing to Jack, "has stolen this valuable document, and doubt not but we shall be able to adduce evidence sufficiently strong to substantiate the fact. In the meantime, I accuse him of having, along with an associate who rejoices in the cognomen of Black Tom, abstracted £10 Sterling from a letter sent by a son to his widowed mother, and of having attempted to fix the blame of this disgraceful transaction on a poor, innocent letter-carrier, who is now, I understand, under examination in your office. The two companions, who are clerks in the Post-office, have, it appears, committed a number of similar crimes, and a number of innocent men have been punished for their transgressions. I have proof of what I assert, and have to request that both of these young men be taken into custody immediately. I have also to suggest, that your Lordship would, for the purpose of facilitating the ends of justice, submit them to instant examination."

Had Belzebub himself appeared among his friends, the Cauldwells, at this moment, he could not have more astonished or horrified them than did this statement of the honest miller's. Lawyer Cauldwell clasped his hands together, and groaned aloud, as if already convinced that the charge against his son was but too well founded. Old Deanhouse quivered and shook like an aspen leaf; while he clenched his skeleton fists, set his yellow teeth together, and gave utterance to a sort of convulsive eh?—eh?—eh?—as he looked first at the miller, and then at his loving nephew. The hopeful nephew himself, however, appeared sufficiently cool and collected, as turning to the Sheriff, he said,—

"My Lord, this is another of those charges which have been brought forward against my character, from the meanest and most mercenary motives. Your Lordship, I believe, from the evidence already given before you in another place, must be convinced of the guilt of that letter-

carrier, and will, I have no doubt, take bail for my appearance at any time, if ever I should be called on to meet this absurd charge."

"Really, Sir," said the Sheriff, a circumstance has occurred within the last half hour, which, together with the charge now made against you, will prevent me from acceding to your request. Officers, secure the person of the gentleman in the other apartment,"—meaning Black-whiskers. "And now, Sir," he continued, addressing the miller, you have made a charge of a very serious nature against these two young men—the responsibility of proving that charge remains with you; and failing that proof, very heavy damages may be awarded against you. Will you be kind enough, therefore, to state at once on what grounds you prefer your accusation?"

"By your leave, my Lord," said the miller, "I shall at once submit to you what I consider evidence sufficient to prove the truth o' every word I hae uttered." He then pulled from the breast-pocket of his large, flapped blue coat a huge pocket-book, and took from thence a piebald-looking, but carefully folded piece of paper, having pasted on its front a number of fragments of a letter that appeared to have been torn into small pieces, which seemed again to have been re-united with much care and labour. The moment this document was handed to the Sheriff, a change was observable on the countenance of Jack Cauldwell, who looked at it with strained eyes, and seemed as if he could have snatched it from the Sheriff with as much good will as he had taken from poor Maillie her marriage-certificate. Such a proceeding, however, was by no means of such easy accomplishment in the present case; and aware that it was so, Jack Cauldwell relapsed into a state of affected indifference.

"That letter, my Lord," said the Miller, was addressed by Black-whiskers to this young gentleman, and was delivered to him at a gambling-house by poor Twopenny Tam, on the evening before their destined victim was apprehended. On that occasion, Game Jack, as he is called by his familiar friends, got into a violent passion with the poor postman, and left the gambling-house immediately after he had torn the letter to pieces. Struck by the strangeness of his manner, and anxious to ascertain the cause of such excitement, the innocent messenger gathered up the crumbs of the letter, which lay scattered over the floor, carried them home, and succeeded in pasting them together again as you now see them. The document, I daresay, is sufficiently legible for your Lordship to decypher; and if you will read it aloud, it will, I think, convince all present that these young men are guilty, and the poor postman innocent."

The Sheriff, thus requested, read the following unique epistle:

"My dear Game Jack,

"The trick's blown—the dibs borrowed from the widow are wanted. Recover the identical notes if possible. We must come clear off. Steeple Tom delivered the letter—he must be scapegoat. To-morrow morning will call on him—pitch the dibs into some corner of his crazy dwelling. Afterwards can apprehend him—find notes where they had been left—clear evidence against him—mum. Come quickly to your loving chum,

"Black Tom."

During the reading of this document, all eyes were turned toward Jack Cauldwell—and all were astonished at the apparent abstraction of his manner. And so they well might; for Jack was buried in profound meditation, and just as the Sheriff had finished the perusal of the letter, Jack Cauldwell had made up his mind to deny all connexion with its writer. He was aware that he was so far in the power of his quondam associate, that Blackwhiskers was in possession of Maillie's marriage-certificate. But he was also aware, that the law was more lenient to lying than thieving; and, from a conversation which he had had that very day with his friend Mr Snacks, he suspected that the firm in which that gentleman was a partner had been rather too many for his uncle, and that the wretched old miser had assigned to them his estate in security on a bubble speculation, which was almost at the bursting. Urged by these considerations, he thus addressed the Sheriff,—

"Sir, I humbly submit that here is no evidence against me. Supposing that this letter had been written by the person to whom it is attributed, and had been delivered to me by this postman, by way of implicating me in the transaction,—there is no proof that I did interfere; neither have I any recollection of having received such an impertinent note from the person accused. If I had done so, it is extremely probable that I would just have acted as I am represented to have done. I would, in the first place, have torn the letter to pieces, and then would either have proceeded to counsel the restoration of the money to the party from whom it had been taken, or have lodged a criminal charge against the perpetrator of such a base and dishonourable action."

"Certainly," said the Sheriff, "although the presumption is, that there must have been a mutual knowledge of the transaction between the writer and the receiver of this letter, yet, as it was not written by you, it cannot, of course, be held as evidence against you."

"And further, Sir," resumed Jack, now emboldened by the statement of the Sheriff, "may I inquire if the money was found in the pre-

mises of the postman, in accordance with the arrangement sought to be effected by the writer of this note?"

"No, it was not," said the Sheriff, "although, indeed, one witness has, in his examination, stated that he saw the money in the possession of the postman; and, I understand, that another witness is now ready to confirm that statement."

"And that witness is now here, my Lord," said the miller, "and the money is now here, too," he continued, as he lugged forth of his huge pocket a little, square wooden box, banded with iron, and secured with a curious, old fashioned lock. In this box are the identical notes, and I am that other witness; and now, with your Lordship's permission, I shall proceed to relate all the particulars, in so far as they are known to me, in connexion with this most iniquitous and disgraceful attempt to criminate one of the most innocent of God Almighty's creatures.

"The poor letter-carrier had but too good reason to fear that he would some time or other fall a victim to the villany of those companions in iniquity Black Tom and Game Jack;—he had long been aware of their unprincipled rascality;—he knew that several poor men had been blamed and punished for their acts; and he determined on watching them closely, in order to obtain proof of their criminality;—he had learned that this money had been abstracted from the widow's letter, and he believed that he would be made the victim. As I formerly stated to you, he had carried home the fragments of the letter which you now hold in your hands, and it took him a great part of the night to put them together. The poor fellow happened to be acquainted with a person in my employment; and the next morning, at an early hour, he came down to ask his friend's advice as to his best course of procedure. The friends communicated the matter to me—no time was to be lost—we determined on our course of action. Twopenny returned immediately home, whither we followed him. My man was stowed away into a sort of kennel, and I into a large press. Twopenny retired to bed, and we waited our expected visitant. After the lapse of about an hour, we heard a footfall on the wooden stair that led to the poor man's airy dwelling. The sounds approached the door, the latch of which was lifted; but the door being barred, remained closed. A tap on it was heard—the postman rose from his truck, slid the bar back, and hastened again to bed—from whence he called to the person without to enter; and that devil in human shape, the black-whiskered miscreant, stalked into the apartment—seated himself on a stool—joked with his intended victim about lying so long in bed—said that he would be wanted at the office that morning at an earlier hour than usual, and that he had come

to waken him, lest he should be absent when wanted, and be found fault with. He then inquired with affected interest after all poor Twopenny's menagerie—whee-ee-owed and chirmed to the birds—cur-dooed to the pigeons—and squeaked with the guinea pigs. After having thus, as he thought, diverted the attention of his intended victim, he suddenly took from his pocket a small parcel, and, unperceived, as he imagined, pitched it into a cupboard in a dark corner of the room. My eyes and those of my fellow witness were open to all his movements; and it was with considerable difficulty that I could refrain from rushing out from my hiding-place, and knocking the scoundrel down on the spot. From a conviction, however, that it was best to let the measure of his guilt be full, I restrained my indignation, and have till now kept to myself the knowledge I had of this infamous affair.

"Shortly after the villain had, as he imagined, effected his purpose, and expressed the most friendly feeling towards poor Twopenny, he took his departure. In the next moment the notes were in my possession—we counted them two or three times over, to make sure—took their numbers—and deposited them in this little strong-box, belonging to the poor postman—the gift, he remarked, of some antiquarian friend, 'wha wad be unco proud to learn that it was made the repository o' the proofs that were to save him frae the gallows.' We also deposited a declaration, signed by Twopenny and myself, and having the mark of my neighbour witness, who could not write. The box has been in my possession ever since; and on opening it, I daresay your Lordship will find the notes and the mutual declaration."

At this moment a loud shout of exultation was heard in the passage, and, in the next instant, in stalked Coal Jock, followed by his friends Mathew Waldie and Mark Sprot. Jock had left the court-room immediately after he had communicated to the Sheriff that Mr Flemyng was the other witness he had alluded to in his evidence. The honest fellow had met with his friends sauntering about the dark close, awaiting the result with commendable patience. They had adjourned together—had taken a second meridian—and had again returned to the lobby at the very moment when Flemyng had begun his statement. They had patiently waited until he had concluded, when, unable longer to resist the inclination they felt to shake hands with and congratulate the worthy miller on the noble part he had acted—they, as formerly stated, rushed into the apartment—Jock bawled out, in triumphant tones, "A's right now, your worship's glory,"—Sprot smirked and smiled, as he held forth his diminutive hand to the jolly miller;—while Waldie's cheeks, moistened with tears of joy, exhibited an unusual

THE SHERIFF COURT

glow of colour, and his "See gin night!" was heard over and over again, but in a gradually lowering tone, as the Sheriff, with some impatience, called for silence from his now somewhat uproarious auditory.

The little, massive, iron-banded, antiquated looking box was now opened, and the notes were found to correspond exactly with the names and numbers of those mentioned in the widow's letter. There could now be no doubt of the guilt of Blackwhiskers, and the innocence of poor Twopenny; and, under this conviction, the Sheriff ordered the latter to be instantly set at liberty. This done, he thus addressed those present:—

"Gentlemen you have this day most unexpectedly, and in a very unusual manner, witnessed the disclosure of a proceeding which goes far to shew that sooner or later guilt will be detected. Your business has been strangely broken in upon and interrupted; but the interruption has served a good purpose. In the meantime, I feel it to be my duty to examine this young man, Thomas Blackmore, for such I understand is his name, notwithstanding his fanciful assumption of Blackwhiskers. His guilt is now clearly established, by the concurrent evidence of two witnesses;—we shall also endeavour to arrive at a conclusion regarding the guilt or innocence of his friend Mr John Cauldwell."

Blackwhiskers, who had previously been ordered into custody, was immediately brought into the apartment between two Sheriff-officers, wearing a look of impudent defiance. Staring hard at the Sheriff, he demanded, in an indignant tone of voice, to know who had dared thus to place him under arrest, and subject him to the deep insult of being apprehended as a felon. The Sheriff at once satisfied him on these points, by charging him with the abstraction of the money from the widow's letter, and proceeded to detail the grounds on which he had thought fit to set the poor postman free, and substitute him in his place. When the Sheriff had concluded a recapitulation of the evidence of the miller, and had exhibited the notes, the countenance of Blackwhiskers at once assumed a most pitiable expression, and, in accents of whining servility, he craved for mercy. He confessed that he had done wrong, very wrong—and that he, as well as his friend Mr John Cauldwell, were much to blame; but he trusted that the Sheriff would give the case his most favourable consideration. "He himself," he said, "was a young man with a very small salary, and had no friends to assist him. His friend Jack, whose disposition was naturally social and generous, even to a fault, perhaps, had always been kept very bare by his relatives. But his prospects in life were excellent; his uncle was known to be wealthy—he was heir-at-law to that venerable relative; he naturally felt anxious to cultivate the society and friendship of the higher classes;

and he, Blackmore, had also been induced to enter into fashionable life, in order to support his very dear friend. That step had led to rather expensive habits, and the consequence was, that they had been obliged to take the loan of a little money occassionally, to keep up appearances, but, with a fixed determination, that it should be returned when Mr John Cauldwell came to his estate."

"This is all irrelevant to the point, Sir," said the Sheriff. "You have confessed your guilt, and that is enough. But your statement, it would appear, in at least so far as Mr John Cauldwell is concerned, is incorrect. That gentleman denies ever having had any connection with you in the commission of these crimes, and declares that you, and you alone, are the guilty party."

"What!" exclaimed Blackmore, as with a face flushed with resentment he turned to John Cauldwell, "Am I to believe this? Do you deny, Sir, that you are not only a participator in, but the original instigator to the course of crime which we have been both pursuing?"

"I crave your protection, my Lord, from the insolent accusation of this hardened villain!" exclaimed Jack, appealing to the Sheriff. "I may have been the dupe of his villany, and have certainly reposed too much confidence in him on many occasions; but in his crimes I have had no participation whatever; and I beg to remark, that the assertion of one who is, on his own confession, a convicted felon, is unworthy of credit."

"My Lord," said Blackmore — now mustering all his energies for a last effort, and looking at his friend as if he could have annihilated him—"My Lord, it is fortunate for me that I have evidence at hand here to prove the truth of my assertion. Do you, Sir," he continued, turning to Miller Flemyng, "Do you recollect of having, about the end of last year, sent to the Edinburgh Post-office a letter addressed to widow Forrester?"

"As weel as I mind o' takin' my mouter frae the last melder that came to Deanhaugh mill," said Flemyng. "What anent the letter, man, eh? Speak on!"

"And do you, Madam," inquired the prisoner, turning to Miss Forrester, who was now listening intently to the proceedings, "Do you recollect having been refused that letter, because you had not money to pay the postage?"

"I do," replied Martha, in thrilling accents.

"And do you further recollect, Miss," he said, "of having been accosted on your way home by that young gentleman, Mr Cauldwell, who was proceeding to offer you violence, when you were rescued by this young man, Mr Lauder?"

"I do remember that event, Sir, very well, and remember it with a mingled feeling of terror and satisfaction," replied Martha.

"Then, Miss," said Blackwhiskers, "allow me to account for Mr Cauldwell's conduct on that occasion. You were seen by him in the lobby of the Post-Office, inquiring for your mother's letter. Impertinent and idle curiosity impelled us to open that letter whenever you left the office. By a perusal of its contents, Mr Cauldwell learned that you had a wealthy relative on his way home to adopt and enrich you. The letter was instantly destroyed—Cauldwell rushed after you to pay his addresses to you, under pretence of a most disinterested affection—his naturally coarse propensities overcame his resolution to conduct himself with decency, and he treated you with abominable rudeness. He wished to appear to admire you for yourself, and to win your affections, while, as yet, you were ignorant of your good fortune. To promote these views, the letter, as I have already mentioned, was destroyed instantly; and this young man," continued Blackmore, turning to Philip, "will recollect, that when he came to the office inquiring for it, he was told that it was gone; and so it was, for it had been thrown into the fire."

"My Lord," exclaimed Cauldwell, "there is no evidence to support these assertions. My meeting with Miss Forrester on the street on the occasion alluded to was purely accidental. This fellow may have opened that letter; I never did. I told him myself of the manner in which I had been received by Miss Forrester, and of the rude assault made upon me by Lauder. Where he got the absurd fabrications which he has just now been endeavouring to impose on you as truths, I do not know."

"Perhaps you know better where I got this!" exclaimed Blackmore, drawing forth from his pocket Maillie's marriage-certificate. "A document which must for ever deprive you and yours of all claim or right to the estate of Dean. Do you dare to deny, Sir, that you took this paper from the old lady to whom it belonged, and gave it to me, that we might at any time practise on the fears of your uncle, and extort what money we wanted from him, under terror of raising a rival claimant to his estate? Sir," continued the prisoner, addressing Mr Forrester, "I believe this is the certificate of your mother's marriage with the elder brother of the present proprietor of Dean. You may thank this young gentleman for it, and not me. I have no other reason for resigning it into your possession, than that it affords another proof of this scoundrel's villany. If I am to swing, I shall have him as my companion."

"I thank heaven for having restored to me, this most valuable

document!" exclaimed Forrester, as he examined the certificate of his mother's marriage; "and although I could have wished that it had come into my possession in a different way—still it is thrice welcome. This document will enable me to rescue the fair fame of my long suffering and sainted mother from all aspersion, and to establish my claim to that estate of which the present possessor is totally unworthy."

It might naturally have been expected that this last disclosure of Blackmore would have abashed Jack Cauldwell, and made him silently acquiesce in the general opinion as to his unprincipled villany. He was now convicted of a deliberate falsehood. He had unhesitatingly, and within the last half hour, denied the existence of such a document, and had declared solemnly that Miss Forrester had been labouring under some hallucination, when she imagined that she had seen him take that certificate from Maillie. All this, it was true, lowered him much in the estimation of every one present; but he cared little for that, being aware that it was no legal evidence against him in the case of the abstraction of money from the widow's letter. Accordingly, he assumed a still more resolute look than he had yet done, and thus addressed the Sheriff,—

"My Lord, this is altogether a different question, and has no relation to the crime of which this prisoner is self-convicted. That certificate I never intended to have kept back from the proper owner, and would at once have given it into his possession, had it not been that the prisoner insisted on retaining it until I got some money for it. I was simple enough to accede to his wishes, and allow him to keep it. But now, I rejoice that it is in the possession of Mr Forrester, and, I suppose, as I have no connexion with the other transaction, for which the wretched prisoner will, in all probability, pay the last penalty of the law, I may bid you all good morning;" and putting his hat on his head, he was about to leave the apartment, amid the suppressed execrations of all present, when the Sheriff exclaimed,—

"Stay, Sir! I cannot allow you to go. You must be detained. Although, I am afraid, the direct evidence is still insufficient to prove your guilt, the moral certainty of it is placed beyond all doubt, by your connexion with this miserable man. It will be the business of the law-agents of the Crown to endeavour, if possible, to obtain a verdict and judgment against you."

"There shall be no possibilities in the matter, my Lord," said Blackmore, knitting his brows, and clenching his fists. "He shall assuredly meet with his deserts;" and as he said this, the ruffian, who was very athletic and powerful, dashed aside the officers who guarded him, strode towards his former companion, and struck him a blow behind the ear,

with a force and precision that instantly extended him lifeless on the floor. The murderer was immediately seized, put in irons, and conveyed to jail.

One would have thought that the degradation and misery of the Cauldwells were now complete; and none felt more for them than did the noble-minded Philip Lauder and the gentle-hearted Martha Forrester. That kind, good girl had entirely forgotten the repeated insults she had been subjected to by that family; and the faults of the young man were also forgotten in the all-absorbing feeling of pity with which she regarded his dead body, which was borne home, accompanied by the father, who was so overcome that he had to be supported by the way. Old Deanhouse, however, remained behind. He was too intent on maintaining possession of the Dean estate to yield it without a severe struggle; and he accordingly stopped, to inquire at the Sheriff as to the character of the marriage-certificate which was likely to be the means of transferring that estate to another. The Sheriff examined the certificate, and having pronounced it genuine, the old miser, perceiving that he had no other alternative, began, by wheedling, to attempt to worm his way into the good graces of Mr Forrester.

"My dear Sir!" he said, "how happy, happy—always felt a yearning towards you. Mysterious sympathy, eh? Curious, eh? Presentiment that we were related. My poor dead brother's son!—Ah! indeed, cheerfully resign whole estate; only like the old house—suits my habits—wouldn't like to move. Like an old cat, eh? You will of course take family name, Cauldwell, eh?"

"Never!" said Forrester. "I am proud of the name which claims so fair a creature as this," pointing to Martha, "and her name shall be mine. I owe the Forresters much, and they shall find me willing, although I may not be able to repay their kindness. I would merely hint to you, Sir," he continued sternly, "that it is needless to attempt to impose upon me again. I now know you, and despise you thoroughly. Your iniquitous character is now revealed to me, and I shall insist upon your giving me a count and reckoning of all your intromissions with the property of Dean, while in your possession. Had I found you a liberal landlord, and a philanthropic country gentleman, you should have died in possession, even although my claim to the estate was indisputable; but mean and miserly as you are, I shall exact from you the last farthing."

"Indeed, I am afraid, Sir," said Mr Snacks, here interposing, and addressing Forrester, "you will be disappointed if you expect Mr Cauldwell here to refund you the rents he has drawn during your absence. His brother, Lawyer Cauldwell, and he have been speculating

largely in feuing and building, and I am afraid the speculation is likely to turn out a bad one. One villa has been built, and will neither sell nor let. The feus are high, and the houses have been built at a high rate. Further, I may here inform Mr Cauldwell of what, he will, I daresay, be astonished to learn, namely, that our banking-establishment has not been paying, notwithstanding every exertion on the part of my partner and myself. We, of course, were obliged to keep company with gentlemen above our own rank in life, and we had started into business with no property, excepting a few wind-bills. Mr Cauldwell is the only gentleman who was believed to be possessed of landed property among the shareholders. Our liabilities are very large, and will, of course, fall upon him to discharge, although the estate of Dean would scarcely have sufficed to pay all the creditors of Chance, Snacks, & Co. The turn which matters has taken grieves me much; and I would have delayed this disclosure, but for the unexpected appearance of a new claimant to the estate of Dean. I suspect that the creditors of Messrs Chance, Snacks, & Co. will now be still worse off than those to whom Messrs Lauder and Hastie are indebted. All the money we raised was got on that estate; and now that it has changed owners, the creditors must just take into their own hand bank and villa, and make the most of them."

No words can convey an adequate idea of the emotion visible in the countenance of old Cauldwell, during the delivery of this speech by his friend, Mr Snacks. With paralyzed look, and quivering lip, he exclaimed, in accents at first hardly audible, but latterly rising to a scream,

"Can't mean that, Snacks, eh? No, no; can't believe it. It is incredible. Babel Row not pay! Bah! nonsense. Banking-establishment not paying! All nonsense! Won't, can't believe it. No property but mine! Away—you want to frighten me. You have an estate; so has Chance—clever fellows both! Brother and I also sharp—couldn't be taken in, eh?"

"'Pon honour, Mr Cauldwell," said Mr Snacks, "every word I have stated is true. Neither my partner nor I have ever had an acre of land. We did our best, and we have been beat. My dear Sir, the fate of war, you know—we may have better luck next time."

"Knaves! Villains! Scoundrels!" shouted old Cauldwell. "Have ye robbed me of all, eh? Are all my hard earnings—the savings effected by my moderate living during the last forty years—all swallowed up in the vortex of your ravenous and ruinous extravagance? Eternal curses on you all! Oh! I shall go mad. I shall have such revenge. I shall keep you in irons in prison till you rot, you dogs!"

"What!" exclaimed old Dinwoodie, who was still in the apartment,

" send me Mr Snacks as a companion, eh, laird? We will run fine in harness together."

" You may bark, but you can't bite, old man," said Snacks to Cauldwell. " You are pennyless and powerless. We will easily effect a sequestration, and force a discharge.

" My dear, dear Sir! nephew, I would say," exclaimed old Cauldwell to Forrester, as a new light seemed to dawn upon him, " claim all that I have as yours—claim it all as yours, money, lands, and all. You were the rightful heir—not one penny belonged to me—not mine own, eh? I had no right to lay it out without your permission. Claim it all—rank as head creditor, get yourself appointed trustee, and allow me a little, a very little, for my management. I shall go mad else. I shall starve else, eh?" and here the old man took off his hat, knelt down, and looked the very impersonation of misery.

" Had that money been still in your possession," said Forrester, " I should have exacted every penny of it from you, and applied it to some charitable purpose. But it is right and just that all your effects should be applied to defray the debts which you and your speculating friends have contracted. Your creditors advanced money, under the conviction that the estate of Dean belonged to you; and although I might claim it in my own right, I scorn to avail myself of that right, and cheerfully resign the estate also into the hands of those who otherwise might be ruined by the losses they might sustain."

" I never contracted any debt!" exclaimed the old man. " I paid plack and farthing. I lived like a chameleon on air, to save money; and how then, could I contract debt? Do not, therefore, allow the estate to pass out of the family, to aggrandize a set of men who have swindled me, eh? Leave me some little thing to keep me from starving. Oh! I shall die;" and the old man shook and trembled as if he anticipated that he was to be starved to death,

" Fear not, wretched man," said Forrester, " you shall have wherewithal to drag out your miserable existence. But in vain you urge me to do that which my conscience cannot approve. Your creditors, I have no doubt, will sell the estate; and perhaps, in the event of my wishing to become a purchaser, they may be induced to let me have it at a moderate price. I shall then have the satisfaction of purchasing it with money of my own earning, and I am better pleased that it should be so. Had I heired it in virtue of my connexion with the Cauldwells, it would, at my death, have reverted to some branch of that family; and I could not have bestowed it on her, whom I shall now have the felicity of establishing heiress, in her own right, to the estate which, for so many centuries has been in the possession of my

forefathers. What say you, Martha, my child?" he continued playfully, chucking Miss Forrester under the chin. "Have you any objections to this arrangement?"

"Ah! my dear uncle," replied Martha, "you have been too indulgent to me. Yet, believe me when I assure you, that I have no ambition to mingle with the higher classes, or to possess a splendid mansion. To me, the humble cottage, with that contentment which every well-regulated mind can command, would be as welcome as a palace. And now, my dear uncle, need I say that I should feel much gratified by your assisting to relieve from his present embarrassment, him who has been my protector and my companion. A little money from you would enable him to pay off all the debts, which, you must now perceive, have been contracted entirely through the knavish instrumentality of this wretched old man, Mr Cauldwell."

At this stage of the proceedings, old Cauldwell was seen making his way to the door, followed by Mr Snacks; and Waldie long afterwards asserted, that the last words he heard issue from the old man's lips were curses, mingled with indistinct murmurings, about new villages—new banks—full coffers—starvation and misery.

"My dearest Martha!" said Forrester, in reply to his niece, "My young friend here, must excuse me for having so long delayed to state to him, that he will oblige me by drawing on me to any amount he chooses, and discharging all the debts contracted by him and his partner in the building of this mill; and I trust that he will be more fortunate in his future speculations, and more cautious in his future contracts."

"Aye, exceptin' ae contract," said the miller, with one of his broad, honest grins, "and my young friend Philip, here, has had his heart lang set on that ane; but I doubt he has sma' chance now. The heiress o' the Dean, I doubt, winna condescend to marry a village carpenter."

"No," replied Mr Forrester, "but if she chooses, she may easily, of her own free will and accord, convert the village carpenter into the Laird of Dean. I shall leave my dear girl to settle that point herself."

"Manfully said, and manfully done, man," roared the miller in a state of high excitement; "an' sin' ye hae adopted the tae orphan, I shall adopt the other, and shall be proud, indeed, gin Philip Lauder here, will allow me to ca' him my son. The auld mill o' Deanhaugh hasna been ill managed. I hae had gude mouters in my time, an' hae saved a gey twa three yellow boys; an' it will gang hard wi' me gin I canna lay doun guinea for guinea wi' my callant to your lassock. The auld Dean house shall be lighted up like an enchanted palace. The Water o' Leith shall rin wi' yill for a day an' a night. A fat ox shall be roasted in the middle o' the town. The next three months'

mouter shall be divided among the poor; and hunders, ay thousands o' hearts shall bless the union o' the orphan Martha Forrester, the adopted daughter o' the Laird o' the Dean, wi' Philip Lauder, the adopted son of the Miller o' Deanhaugh."

This happy, and apparently preconcerted, arrangement settled, Philip and Martha, whose faces had been suffused with blushes during the latter part of the miller's speech, withdrew from the room together, and, it is asserted, walked out all the way to Thorniedell, without feeling in the least fatigued.

"Gin Philip's gaun to be made a gentleman o'," said auld Dinwoodie, "I might maybe speak a word for mysell. Auld Cauldwell winna be able to pay my aliment in the jail ony langer; an', I think, gin I had Philip's bit shop in the Water o' Leith, I could do unco weel."

"Tuts, man," said the miller, "I'll be caution for ye mysell; but ye maun keep unco sober, and no be turnin' up yere wee finger sae aften as ye used to do."

"Ah! ha! Mr Flemyng," chuckled Dinwoodie, "catch me at that, lad. I hae gotten a bite o' my ain bridle noo, and winna be sae easily led frae the road."

"Toots, miller! ye maunna be ower hard on auld Dinwoodie," said Waldie, "ye used to like your twalhours weel eneugh yoursell. But riches winna hide, an' folk change their habits wi' their stations. Ye'll ne'er come in now to smoke a pipe, or tak a bit dram wi' us in the smiddy—forget us a'thegither, eh? See gin night!"

"Forget you, man, Waldie!" exclaimed the miller, "na, na, lad. As you an' I hae been, sae will we be, I trow, to the end o' the chapter, sworn brithers, in love an' freendship."

"I reckon," said Coal Jock, now coming forward, and smoothing down his hair on his brow, "I reckon you'll no hae ony mair use for me now, when ye are gaun to gie up the mill, maister."

"My good fellow!" exclaimed Forrester, "when Mr Flemyng dispenses with your services, you shall enter mine. That is to say, if you have no objection. I shall speak to Philip to appoint you gamekeeper on the estate; but, recollect, you must give up cockfighting. Learn to imitate the manners of the poor postman, who has this day been so nobly protected and relieved chiefly through your means. I understand that he is also passionately attached to animals; but he loves to see them happy, and does not, like you, encourage their destructive propensities."

"Indeed, Sir," said Tam, "I'm sae muckle indebted and attached to my freend, John, here, sae fond o' a country life, and wad like sae weel to hae the bonny Corstorphin Hill to walk ower in the morning,

that gin John was made gamekeeper, I wad be his assistant for naething."

"Well said, Twopenny!" exclaimed the Sheriff. "I shall speak to my friend, the Secretary of the Post-Office, in your favour. You have grown grey in the service, and are well entitled to a pension. You will effect a great improvement on your friend, Coal Jock, as he calls himself, who is, with all his faults, really a sterling, honest, worthy fellow."

"No mony o' the Embro' wives," said Jock, "wad gree wi' ye there. When I was in the coal tred, they aye said that I gied light weight; but I couldna afford to gie a' body heavy weight, when I gied awa sae muckle to the poor for naething."

"Aweel, Sirs," said little Mark Sprot, who had, in a most unaccountable manner remained silent all this time, and who appeared rather crestfallen, "I fancy my occupation's gane now? But I'll be upsides wi' ye a' yet, I'll warrant ye. Bide ye till the weddin', and I'll let ye see a sang on Martha, as I ance promised afore, that will beat the Gaberlunzie to sticks."

"Speak o' the deil an' he'll appear!" exclaimed the miller. Here comes the canty carle, wi' his wallet ower his back, an' his staff in his hand. Whaur on earth has he been a' this time? I haena seen him for years. Yet he surely maun hae ta'en a new lease o' life—for he looks as young as ever. I'll warrant ye, Mark, he'll be for makin' the sang on Martha's weddin' himsell—she was a pet o' his when she was a wean, an' he made a bit poem on her then, that has drawn a tear frae my ee afore now. But ne'er ye mind, Mark, ye shall get the liveries an' the weddin' claes to mak; an' gin there's no sae muckle honour in makin' claes as in makin' poetry, there's mair profit, and that's mair usefu' in keepin' the wife an' weans in milk an' meal; sae, Mark, lad, stick ye to the tailoring, an' leave the poetry to the Gaberlunzie."

Can it be necessary for me to appeal to your own heart, dear reader, for a response to the delight which I experienced while my old friend, Flemyng, rehearsed to me the good fortune of Martha Forrester. Need I attempt to describe the joy, the rapture, with which I learned that she, whose infant beauty had dawned upon me amid scenes of poverty and sickness, was now surrounded and supported by kind and affluent friends—was now the load-star that attracted all eyes—the charmer who elicited universal adoration, and was now about to be led to the altar, the blushing bride of a virtuous, manly, and handsome youth. Shall I go on to relate how shortly thereafter Forrester effected a purchase of the Dean estate; and how happy we all were on that ever memorable day, when Martha Forrester looked more beautiful,

MARRIAGE FESTIVAL.

and Philip Lauder more manly than ever. Tents were erected on the lawn in front of the ancient house of Dean, where the surrounding peasantry assembled, and awakened the echoes of the adjoining hills by their loud and reiterated huzzahs. Dancing, fiddling, singing, and every kind of light-hearted merriment went joyously onward. There were the miller and I to be seen bobbing away at a foursome reel with the bride and her mother; while Waldie and Sprot were tripping it vigorously, if not very gracefully, with Mrs Sprot and the ancient housekeeper. All the details of this happy scene your own imagination, dear reader, must supply; and to your own imagination must I leave it, to conceive with what excitement I recited the following epithalamium, cheered on by the applause of a numerous assemblage, and supported by my kind, old friend the Miller of Deanhaugh, to whose good company I commend you until we meet again.

EPITHALAMIUM.

Deck the bride with opening flowers,
Plucked at dawn of early morn,
Moist with young May's dewy showers,
Sweet with fragrance newly born;—
Passing fair these flowers must be,
Emblems of her purity.

Maidens rosy as the dawn,
Pure and bright as dewy sheen,
Trip ye lightly o'er the lawn,
Gather round your maiden Queen:—
Hide these glances of her eye,
Else poor wounded hearts will die.

Come, brave youth, your prize now claim,
Bear you home your blushing bride,
With true heart, and honest fame ;
With such beauty by your side,—
Where's the deed you may not dare
For a maid so heavenly fair ?

In these throbbing hearts are shrined,
Smiling Hope, and calm Content ;
Truth and Love are there entwined,
Grace and Virtue there are blent :—
Truth and Virtue never die,
Nought but Love with them can vie.

Ah ! where lovers fond and true,
Thus are linked in wedlock's chain,
One the path they both pursue,
Till their starry home they gain ;—
There their love shall light a sphere,
With the ray first kindled here.

MACPHERSON & SYME, PRINTERS,
31 EAST ROSE LANE.